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ABSTRACT

A first stage evaluation of the Even Start Program of the Newark (New Jersey) public schools is presented. Even Start is an early childhood parental involvement program in its third year of implementation. Goals are to involve parents as active partners, to help children develop cognitively and affectively, and to improve adult literacy and English fluency skills. Three survey instruments were used to measure parental involvement. A survey of attitudes and practices of parent involvement was completed by 34 participating parents and 132 non-program parents. A survey of teacher attitudes and practices was completed by 11 participating teachers and 11 non-participating teachers. Seventeen project staff completed a survey about project implementation. Findings reflect a common theme of improved collaborations and reciprocal parent/staff decision making. Both staff and parents report a better understanding of children's problems and improved communication. These preliminary findings can serve to guide program improvement efforts and district planning. Study data are presented in 28 tables. Two appendixes contain the assessment measures and the means and standard deviations for the teacher survey responses. (SLD)

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NEWARK SCHOOL DISTRICT

Even Start: An Assessment of Parent Involvement in Early Childhood Education

1990-1991

Prepared by

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EVEN START: AN ASSESSMENT OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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PREFACE

This study presents a first stage process evaluation of the Even Start program. Even Start is an early childhood parental involvement program in its third year of implementation in the Newark School District. The goals of the project are threefold; to involve parents as active partners in their children's learning, to help children develop cognitively and affectively, and to improve adult literacy and increase English fluency skills. The overarching aim is to enable parents to enrich the preschool experiences of their children and become active and more confident partners in their learning.

Issues of interest which were examined for this study, and which have been identified as influencing effective program implementation, include organizational features of the program, family and school climate factors, and characteristics of continuity and reciprocity in the communications between home and school. These issues were looked at from both parent and staff perspectives.

Two conceptual frameworks were used to tentatively operationalize "parent involvement". Epstein and Becker describe 5 different types of parent involvement "experiences". These include 1) the basic obligations of parents or ways in which parents cooperate with schools; 2) the basic obligations of schools or ways in which schools communicate with home, 3) parent involvement practices at school or ways in which parents assist with school related activities, 4) parent involvement in learning activities and homework, and 5) advisory and decision-making roles for parents. Cervone and O'Leary (1982) depict parent involvement along a continuum from passive to active roles ranging from 1) reporting student progress, and 2) special events, to more active ways to participate, namely, 3) parent education, and 4) parent teaching. The presence of continuities between school and home, which include the varied socialization practices and norms which families and schools may regard as their goals, and the presence of reciprocity between home and school, which include mutual and shared collaborative roles for parents and teachers, were the outcomes which this study chose to associate with effective program outcomes.

Three different survey instruments were used to measure the features of parental involvement specified by the two frameworks. The data was gathered within district for the local evaluation. A survey of parents' attitudes and practices of parent involvement was completed by 34 parents who participated in the Even Start program, and by a sample of 132 non program parents. A survey of teacher attitudes and practices of parent involvement was administered to 11 program teachers and to a sample of 11 non program teachers. A third program implementation survey was completed by 17 project staff including project coordinators, teachers, and teacher aides, to provide perspectives on program implementation, administrative supports, program coordination and other organizational features that might affect program outcomes.

The descriptive data presented in chapters 2 through 6 reveal the socio-economic features and family characteristics of the parents served by Even Start, findings from narratives on program implementation reported by staff and parents, and parent and teacher attitudes toward parental involvement with respect to the variables identified by the two frameworks. The results presented in this report are preliminary to a second phase evaluation where student and adult outcomes will be compared for program and non program participants to determine if effects can be attributed to the program.

Findings from the staff implementation survey, along with parent narratives on program features, reflect a common theme of improved collaborations and reciprocal parent/staff decision making that is taking place in the Even Start program. Staff and parents both report a better understanding of the problems both parents and staff encounter around educating children. Both appear more aligned in relation to family learning objectives and possibilities, and report that Even Start has furthered cooperative connections, like perceiving "the other" more likely as partners than as adversaries.

In some areas, Even Start parents' outcomes show higher participation rates than the non program parent cohort, which suggest improved linkages and communication between home and school. Although both Even Start and Non Even Start parents mostly agreed and reported positive attitudes on questions related to school climate, and to helping their children with school work, Even Start parents report higher expectations of the school, higher parent participation rates in the lower grades, and are more likely to experience joint activities and trips with their children. However, Even Start parents were less likely than their comparison group to actually participate in learning activities with their child, which may be influenced by a combination of factors, including that children who participated in Even Start was more likely to be younger than the Non-Even Start cohort, and that parents who participated in the Even Start program were less likely than their Non-Even Start cohort to have completed high school. These issues highlight the importance of developing effective strategies that will translate parent values supportive of parent involvement into behaviors that will impact on early childhood learning.

More Even Start parents than the Non-Even Start parent cohort report improved communication from school to home in some areas, on the one hand, and were, on the other hand, more likely to rate the school as "does not do well" on other areas of school to home communications. These seemingly opposing positions may suggest that parents who become more actively involved in school will develop a recognition for the positive efforts that their child's school makes, however at the same time, will find a stronger voice in expressing disapproval at the way some current practices are carried out.

Findings from the teachers' survey suggest more school to home communications, and greater reciprocity between school and home responsibilities for learning for the Even Start teachers. On the other hand, Non-Even Start teachers were more likely to associate the belief that parent involvement is important for student success in learning and staying in school with the belief that in-service training is needed to understand and implement effective parent involvement practices, which suggests a recognition of the need to learn new strategies to involve parents. However, both teacher groups recognized the need to develop more parent involvement practices.

Since differing perspectives and values of schools and families about needs and resources that affect children's learning are likely to influence patterns of chronic underachievement and school failure, the educational value of this preliminary study is presumably in its efforts to add to current research on parental involvement. Hopefully, these preliminary findings can serve to guide strategies to improve the Even Start program, and to guide district planning for future parental involvement, particularly in light of current initiatives to expand and provide more comprehensive services at the Parent Resource Center.

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INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

The main objectives of this evaluation of the Newark school district's Even Start program are twofold: identify parent involvement and school climate factors which are likely to enhance the early educational experiences and outcomes for children and families who participate in the Even Start program; and identify parent and teacher attitudes and practices which may foster continuity, reciprocity and effective communication between home and school. "Parental involvement" is seen as a continuum of different types of home school partnerships ranging from the extremes of separatist, where the communication is "one way", to interactive, where the communication involves active sharing of educational roles.

Overview:

The President's America 2000 educational strategy in 1991 proposed as its first goal that every child will start school ready to learn by the year 2000, a goal recognized as prerequisite to the success of all other goals (Le Tendre, 1991). Variables, such as parent child interactions are recognized as contributing to educational outcomes. School based services which include counseling, tutoring and parent involvement, are seen as key to prevention and early intervention for students, particularly those at high risk of school failure.

Although there is lack of agreement about the meaning of "parental involvement" in early childhood education, and although there is an absence of empirical data to link parent involvement strategies to student outcomes, research supports that parents have significant influence upon their children's learning (Schaefer, 1972; Moles, 1982; Powell, 1989). The research that has shaped current conceptualizations represents a fundamental departure from the traditional psychoanalytic and psycho-sexual theories of human development. It seeks to incorporate broader views of mother-child attachment and deprivation as a generating source for theories that explore the influences of parent attitudes, culture, socio-economics, and behavior on children's learning experiences (Bronfenbrenner 1974, 1976). A collection of readings by Bronfenbrenner (1972) entitled Influences of Human Development reflects this change in thinking and has enriched our understanding of the forces that shape human development and behavior. The collection includes the work of Bowlby and Spitz, Harlowe, Gewirtz, Kagan, Baumrind, Caudill and Frost, Gray and Klaus, among others.

Although the idea of parents working together with schools to assist in learning, on one hand, has been recognized as potentially significant, obstacles toward its success in practice have been identified. Factors which interfere with continuity, reciprocity and effective communication between home and school influence the nature and outcomes of home/school linkages. Current theories claim that educational success is related to improving continuities between home and school, and that a child's developmental potential is enhanced when role expectations between home and school are compatible, and when communication becomes reciprocal and interpersonal (Powell, 1989; Bronfenbrener,1979; Lightfoot, 1978, 1981; Comer, 1986; Laosa, 1980, 1982). Continuities and discontinuities include varied socialization practices and cultural norms which mothers and teachers may regard as their goals. Reciprocity includes

the mutual and shared reinforcements of adult/child interactions, which would include more active and collaborative roles for parents and teachers. As cumulative research suggests, these issues seem particularly important in context of the seemingly intractable problems of urban education.

Powell (1989) discusses several early childhood pilot studies, like one conducted by Hess and colleagues (1979) with 34 pre school teachers and 67 mothers from varied socioeconomic backgrounds. While both groups held similar goals for the children, mothers were more likely than teachers to emphasize social skills and earlier mastery of developmental tasks. Mothers were less likely to value independence, and mothers' teaching styles were more likely to be direct, explicit or demanding. The findings from this study, though representing only a limited sample, illustrate different values and practices of early childhood socialization by parents and teachers, and serve to illustrate some of the disparities related to culture, social class, parent or teacher roles, etc..

Educational policies and planning must also consider the discontinuities that "ethnocentrism" creates when school practices take place in mainly traditional contexts of the dominant culture for children of racial and cultural diversity. Although these issues are increasingly talked about, not much research has been reported.

Current formulations claim that learning can be understood and examined as a complex social process mediated by culture and power in the relationships between school and home (Lightfoot, 1978). As such, the diversity and often disadvantaged social/economic standing of families in urban communities influence the manifestation of communications between school and home. Factors such as role differences, cultural values, behavioral expectations, social skills, conformity, and educational goals shape the communications. At the same time, formal educational policies, and teacher expectations and values influence the nature of communication and continuity between urban schools and neighborhood families.

With recognition of the importance of parent as educator, a more holistic view of education has emerged which no longer separates the socialization experience learned in the family from the cognitive skills acquired in the schools. This more integrative perspective advocates parent involvement as a potentially powerful resource to accelerate pre-school education, to foster and sustain educational development. Future research efforts would be of value which:

1) compare the effects of socialization and teaching by parents and teachers in settings where comparisons can be made with and without special program interventions;

2) incorporate more predictive research strategies;

3) link intermediate variables such as socioeconomic status and family structure and culture to educational outcomes.

Models of Parent Involvement:

One broad category of programs which reflect reform efforts of the 1980's were parent

education/parent involvement initiatives (Walker 1990; Nye, 1986). The programs represent a wide variety of responses from federal, state, private and local communities and social agencies. Classical "parent education" models, on the one hand, are intended to change child-rearing methods - i.e. S.T.E.P., P.E.T.. On the other hand, parent education /involvement /educational readiness models involve parents directly or indirectly in the cognitive development of their children, and may involve partnerships with community based groups. Evaluation of these methods overall show an absence of valid and reliable measures for assessing parental behaviors and change, or educational outcomes of children (Nye, 1986).

In an article which summarizes research conducted in the 1970's on parent participation programs, Moles (1982) identifies several concepts:

1. need to reexamine beliefs about the kinds of parents who are interested and want to be involved - research suggests that parents' interest in participating is clear and strong, irrespective of social class issues;

2. need to include parents in program development in order to build a sense of shared participation and ownership that is also based on shared assessments of need;

3. staff development and training in cultural diversity have been largely absent;

4. need to clarify staff and parent roles to make expectations clearly understood;

Williams and Chavkin (1989) identify 7 factors that contribute to promising parent involvement programs in a 5 state region of Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas:

1. written policies that legitimize the importance of parent participation;

2. administrative support;

3. training for staff and parents;

4. joint planning, goal setting, defining of roles;

5. reciprocal communication;

6. networking with other resources;

7. evaluation which monitors the key stages, fosters program revision and allows for tracking of program activities;

Summary:

In this chapter, several issues have been identified that relate to effective parent involvement

in schools. These issues, which include school climate factors, continuity and reciprocity in communication between home and school, and administrative and program implementation considerations, will be discussed from the multiple perspectives which this study has chosen to present.

Chapter 2 elaborates on the evaluation questions and design for this study, and profiles goals and objectives of the Even Start program. Data will be included from the national data base to provide a baseline from which to evaluate program effects over time in the second stage evaluation (1992). In the second stage, Even Start participants will be compared with their non Even Start counterparts to determine whether outcomes can be attributed to the program. The descriptive data presented in this report should be seen as preliminary. However, they provide clear information on the initial phases of the program and a profile of parental orientations toward schooling and literacy.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 will present findings from a program implementation survey, and from parent and teacher surveys. Even Start program findings will be reported using a conceptual model that identifies different types of parent involvement (Epstein and Becker 1987), which include the basic obligations of schools, the basic obligations of parents, parental involvement in learning activities and homework, parent involvement at school, and governance and decision-making roles for parents. The evaluation will also apply the Cervone and O'Leary framework (1982) to interpret parent involvement practices along the continuum from passive to active. Findings will also be interpreted in the context of variables that we know impact on effective home-school collaborations, i.e. continuity and reciprocity in communication between home and school (Powell, 1989). Chapter 6 summarizes the phase I evaluation findings, discusses evaluation concerns and suggests recommendations based upon these findings.

CHAPTER 2

EVALUATION DESIGN AND PROGRAM DESCRIPTIVES

All Even Start projects are required to participate in both national and local evaluation efforts. The national evaluation has been contracted by the Department of Education to Abt Research Associates and RMC Corporation, who manage and coordinate the data gathering, and report the findings from over 100 Even Start projects. The National Evaluation Information System (NEIS), has been designed to provide all Even Start projects with a uniform system to record family information, the delivery of core services, program implementation data, and to record data on adult and child outcomes. (Abt Assoc., 1991)

The local Newark School district evaluation by the Office of Planning, Evaluation and Testing, seeks to generate and address research questions of local interest. Given the program goals and objectives of the Newark Even Start program, a methodological design combining quantitative and qualitative strategies will be used to determine the effectiveness of the local Even Start program. The overall purpose of the study is to assess program effects on parental involvement and on student achievement. Because the program has evolved through an initial startup phase (Fall 1989 through summer 1990) to full implementation of multiple services to both parents and children (fall 1990 through summer 1991), it will be necessary to evaluate the progress and success of the program in different phases. The purpose of the present report is to present some preliminary results of the program evaluation. This first phase of the evaluation is guided by the following two questions:

1. Whether parents and teachers who participate in the Even Start program are more likely than non participating parents and teachers to report attitudes and practices that suggest more continuity, reciprocity and effective communication between home and school.

2. Whether parents and teachers who participate in the Even Start program are more likely than non participating parents and teachers to support and practice more active parent involvement roles and strategies than passive/receptive ones.

Data for this local evaluation is derived from 2 sources, the National data base and from local district assessment strategies. This 1st phase of the local evaluation will not report on adult literacy or child outcome data since startup program development and implementation makes outcome evaluation concerns a premature and not yet realizable goal. The effectiveness of new programs is related to planning and implementation features of the programs. Since programs usually evolve in stages, from initial start-up through planning and implementation, outcomes are dependent upon a number of features of the institutional setting, and upon the planning and implementation stages (Zellman, 1981).

The second stage evaluation planned for 1991-1992 will examine outcome data on student achievement and parent child interaction practices before and after program implementation to compare pre and post parental involvement practices with student outcomes. The proposed evaluation questions and strategies which will guide this second phase are:

1. Whether student achievement and parental involvement are associated both before and after implementation of Even Start for a treatment and control group.

2. Whether student achievement scores differ for the two groups of students.

3. Whether the level of parent involvement will be different at time 2 for the two groups of parents.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The Newark Even Start Program is an after school program, located in three areas of Newark; the north ward, the west ward, and the central ward; it serves a cross-section of the Chapter I eligible population. The program is community based at 3 elementary schools, 13th Avenue, Quitman Street and Dr. William Horton. Participants in the program include children between the ages of two and seven and their parents.

Newark is the largest city in New Jersey, with a population of over 300,000 residents and a school population of 48,000 students. The school district has 13 high schools, 3 middle schools 55 elementary schools and eight special education schools. The district's ethnic composition is approximately 65% African-American, 25% Hispanic, 9% White and 1% Other. Newark has a young population with a median age of 34.5. Approximately 10% of the population is between ages fifteen and nineteen.

Recruitment efforts are broad-based and utilize the existing channels of home-school communication, school and community parent groups, and outreach through community churches and other community based organizations. As in many urban centers, large numbers of Newark families exist at or below the poverty income levels. Many social factors contribute to multiple needs for educational and community support services. Because participants in the Even Start program will represent families, including extended families and often adults who provide care to non-related children, the school-based nature of the Even Start program and the linkages with community services are expected to have a broad impact in the communities and the 3 schools which Even Start serves.

The Even Start Program:

Goals of the Even Start Program are to:

1) help parents become knowledgeable and confident partners in the educational lives of their children;

2) help children reach their fullest potential as learners through direct instruction and through activities which develop the parent's role as the child's first and most important educator;

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3) help parents become skilled learners and teachers of their children by improving literacy skills - with emphasis where needed on English fluency, and G.E.D. training;

Program Objectives relating to the goals are:

Parenting:

- to improve the quality of child-parent interactions in academic skills areas, in non-cognitive areas, in areas of child development, safety, health, and learning concepts and techniques;
- to increase parental awareness of academic skills and expectations for their children that are necessary for their child's success in school;
- to increase parental awareness of the effect and importance of the home environment upon child development;
- to provide training to clarify the significant relationships between learning in the home and learning in the school;

Early Childhood Education:

- to introduce the computer as a learning tool in the home;
- to provide children with experiences which promote self-confidence and development of motor, perceptual and cognitive skills;
- to provide children with experiences which are designed to promote successful introductions to school skills and expectations.

Adult Literacy:

- to increase literacy to enable parents make reading an on-going, enjoyable experience in the home;
- to increase English fluency which will enable parents to enrich and expand the preschool experiences of their children, who will be taught in the English language;
- to encourage parents to continue to improve their literacy skills up to the G.E.D. level.
- to encourage parents to develop pre-vocational and /or pre-employment skills.

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Program planning designed to implement the above goals and objectives are:

Parenting Skills: The parenting component is designed to involve parents with their children. This component begins with instruction at the Even Start Center, but shifts to the home with activities that parents and their children can do together. An important part of Newark's Even Start Program is the Take Home Computer component. Nine families are provided with a computer for eight to ten weeks. This component is designed to reinforce and enrich family learning with appropriate software, and to foster a positive home-learning environment.

Early Childhood Education: The Early Childhood Education (ECE) component is designed to help children develop cognitively and affectively, while enabling parents to participate in the Even Start Program. Children are provided with experiences which promote self-confidence and development of motor, perceptual and cognitive skills by an early childhood education teacher and four classroom teacher aides to maximize individuation and flexibility. Because the various Even Start components have been scheduled during the same time, it is easy to combine those components. Some early childhood education activities are planned for parents and children to do together.

In addition to ECE provided directly through Even Start, all three schools participate in the Chapter I After School Tutorial Program. This program is appropriate for older siblings of Even Start children. Two of the three Even Start schools also have an After School Recreation Program sponsored by the Board of Education to provide organized recreational activities for older children.

Parents are encouraged to visit and interact with their children in the early childhood classes to gain first hand knowledge about their learning and to encourage learning reinforcement. In addition, "Family Activity Logs" are kept on a weekly basis to monitor family activities in the home.

Adult Literacy: The Adult Literacy Component offers multiple services so that parents will be better able to involve themselves as their child's first teachers, and subsequently monitor and help them with their school work. Adult literacy is offered directly through Even Start and is available indirectly through Newark's Adult Education Programs. Parents are tested before and after enrollment in the program on the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) to establish proficiencies in adult basic skills and to monitor their progress. Acquisition of English proficiency is also encouraged. A curriculum has been developed by the Adult Basic Skills teachers to help parents develop literacy skills in Reading and Math, to improve competency with written and oral communication skills, and to demonstrate that mathematics plays a major part in achieving education goals.

The current program year (1991-1992) included the development of pre-employment and pre-vocational skills. Participants express interest in finding employment, but often lack the necessary skills. A curriculum for high school level literacy skills in Reading and Math has been developed also during the 1991-1992 program year to address the higher level of basic skills

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proficiencies demonstrated by many of the parents.

Participants:

The Newark Even Start program targets children ages two through seven and their parents for instruction in child success, parenting and adult literacy.

Recruiting families for Even Start is done on an on-going basis. Fliers are distributed at schools and within the community to allow for a broad-based recruitment. School personnel have been made aware of the services which Even Start provides and assist in referring families. The Even Start project coordinator is actively involved in establishing ties with community resources to provide a variety of additional services to Even Start families and linkages with the Even Start program.

Staff:

Using 3 school sites for after school programming is a community-based approach which encourages participation by youngsters and staff who are already present at these locations. It also provides easy access and advantages for parental involvement.

The staff of Even Start includes one full time project coordinator. Parttime staff include three site coordinators, three adult education teachers, three parent education teachers, three early childhood education teachers and twelve aides to maximize individualization and program diversification. Teachers have been trained to administer the assessment instruments which are part of the National Evaluation Information System (NEIS). Teachers and coordinators participate in in-service training which allows opportunities to share successful strategies and ideas with colleagues.

Two community aides have been added to the program during the summer of 1991 to track program participants, to follow up with home visits and to make telephone contacts as needed.

The following reflects a typical schedule of Even Start activities for the 3 ten week modules during the school year.

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Parenting Adult Literacy (3:00-5:00)	Parenting Adult Literacy (3:00-5:00)	Parenting Adult Literacy (3:00-5:00)
Early Childhood Education (3:00-5:00)	Early Childhood Education (3:00-5:00)	Early Childhood Education (3:00-5:00)

The scheduling and location of Even Start sites has been done to maximize joint participation by parents and children. The three sites are centered within three of Newark's five wards, and are accessible to parents from several school locations. In addition to the three ten week modules during the school year, a four week summer morning program has taken place at all 3 sites during the summers of 1990 and 1991.

Descriptive Data on Families:

Tables 2.1 and 2.2 provide descriptive information downloaded from the National Evaluation System and shared with our local evaluators by RMC. The data profiles family characteristics at intake of Newark families who participated in Even Start for the reporting year ending December 1990.

In particular, Table 2.1 below shows the number of families, number of adults within families, and number of children on whom family information was reported.

Table 2.1

Even Start Participants

# of Even Start Families	62
# of Adult members in families	93
# of children within families	125

Before discussing the descriptive data, some concerns about limitations of the evaluation methods and procedures are important to address. To avoid duplication of effort (i.e. personnel and time), a decision was made to use the family descriptive data from the NEIS system to profile Newark's Even Start families. However, the first two sets of data from RMC presented a number of technical difficulties. Some of the technical problems had the effect of limiting the ways in which the data could be transcribed for summary reporting. Missing data on different reporting forms also contributed to difficulties in matching family members on variables. Ambiguity in assigning individual codes to target Even Start and non target family members also prevented accurate identification of those children in families who directly participated in Even Start. Also, the unit of analyses were sometimes difficult to identify between files, and shifted from family level data to individual level data. The individual level data did not always reflect family members who were directly receiving core services. Important features of program implementation, i.e.like the intensity of interventions, had not yet been entered on database. As a result, the information on the basis of which the analysis proceeds is limited, and the results should be interpreted with caution.

Table 2.2 presents information on the 62 families who participated in Even Start for the reporting year ending December 31, 1990. Participating adults (sometimes referred to as the target adult) were primarily women - 93.5% were females; approximately 65% of families reported that they were single parent; 14.5% that they were couples; and 12.9% that they were extended families. However, when this variable is compared with the number of family members reported under the same family identification code, it appears that more families show up as couples or extended families than were reported by the target adult.

The primary source of financial support for 80.6% of the 62 families was government assistance, with only 16.1% reporting income from job wages. Almost 55% of the Even Start families reported family income to be under $5,000; and 24% reported incomes between $5,000 and $10,000 - for a combined 79% of families reporting family incomes below $10,000. On

TABLE 2.2

Characteristics of Newark's Even Start Families at Intake for Reporting Year Ending December 31, 1990 (N=62)

	NUMBER (PERCENT)		
Number of Adults in Even Start Families			
Participating Adults	62		
Other Adults in Families	30		
Gender of Participating Adults			
Females	58(93.5%)		
Males	2(3.2%)		
Not Reported/Missing	2(3.2%)		
Number of Children in Even Start Families	**< AGE ONE**	**AGE 1-7**	**AGE 8-16**
None	51(82.3%)	----	45(72.6%)
One	10(16.1%)	26(41.9%)	8(12.9%)
Two	1(1.1%)	27(43.5%)	8(12.9%)
Three		8(12.9%)	1(1.6%)
Not Report/Missing	1(1.6%)	1(1.6%)	
Family Structure			
Single Parent	40(64.5%)		
Couple	9(14.5%)		
Extended Family	8(12.9)		
Other	1(1.6%)		
Not Reported/Missing	4(6.5%)		
Primary Source of Financial Support			
Job Wages	10(16.1%)		
Government Assistance	50(80.6%)		
Alimony/Child Support	0(0.0%)		
Other	1(1.6%)		
Not Reported/Missing	1(1.6%)		

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED: TABLE 2.2)

Characteristics of Newark's Even Start Families at Intake for Reporting Year Ending December 31, 1990 (N=62)

	NUMBER (PERCENT)	
Range of Family Income		
Under $5,000	34(54.8%)	
$5,000-$10,000	18(24.0%)	
$10,000-$15,000	0(0.0%)	
$15,000-$20,000	4(6.5%)	
$20,000-$25,000	1(1.6%)	
$25,000 or more	3(4.8%)	
Not Reported/Missing	2(3.2%)	
Highest Grade Completed		
3-8 years	6(10.0%)	
9 years	3(4.8%)	
10 years	4(6.5%)	
11 years	5(8.1%)	
12 years	6(9.7%)	
High School Diploma	9(14.5%)	
GED	1(1.1%)	
Post Secondary	7(11.3%)	
Other	2(3.2%)	
Not Reported/Missing	19(30.6%)	
Employment Status		
Full-Time	4(6.4%)	
Part-Time	2(3.2%)	
Unemployed	55(88.7%)	
Not Reported Missing	1(1.6%)	
	Months Employed	**Months Unemployed**
Less Than 6 Months		
6 Months to 12 Months	3(3.2%)	8(12.9%)
12 Months or More	4(6.4%)	46(74.2%)
Not Reported/Missing	56(90.3%)	8(12.9)

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED: TABLE 2.2)

Characteristics of Newark's Even Start Families at Intake for Reporting Year Ending December 31, 1990 (N=62)

	NUMBER (PERCENT)
Social or Educational Services	**Previous**
Welfare	17(27.4%)
Employment Training	2(3.2%)
Vocational Training	1(1.6%)
Vocational Rehabilitation	0(0.0%)
Adult Basic Education (0-4)	0(0.0%)
Adult Basic Education (5-8)	1(1.6%)
Adult Secondary (9-12)	1(1.6%)
GED Preparation	0(0.0%)
ESL	1(1.6%)
Other	3(4.8%)
Not Reported/Missing	36(58%)
Race	
Blacks	38(61.3%)
Whites	0(0.0%)
Hispanics:	
Puerto Rican	22(35.5%)
Cuban	1(1.6%)
Other	1(1.6%)
Primary Language	
English	
Yes	43(69.4%)
No	19(30.6%)
Spanish	
Yes	18
No	1

another variable, employment status, 15.1% of target adults identified themselves as employed full-time; 3.2% as employed part-time; and 88.7% as unemployed. The most frequently identified social or educational service which the target adult identified as previously or currently receiving was welfare service, with 27.4% reporting it as a previous service, and 24.2% as current.

Slightly more than 61% of families are Afro-American; 35.5% are Puerto Rican; one family is Cuban; and one reported other Hispanic. Sixty-nine percent report English as their primary language; and 29% report Spanish as their primary language.

Only 30.6% (or 19 of 62) of the participating adults reported having a high school diploma or more. However, more than one-third of the data on this variable was either not reported, or voided because of multiple data entries.

Descriptive Data on Parent-Child Interactions and Parent as Teacher:

One of the assessment instruments used in the National reporting system (NEIS) to assess parent-child interactions and parent as teacher behaviors will be used in the second stage evaluation for pre and post program assessment of parental change. Since the data available to us at this time provides only a single snapshot assessment of parents' interactions with their child, we are presenting the data descriptively. A copy of the Parent-Child Interactions and Parent as a Teacher Instrument is attached in Appendix A.

Table 2.3 and Table 2.4 respectively show the reported frequency with which parents read to their children, and the number of books available in the home. Both tables indicate that literacy is present in most households both in terms of resources, and in terms of activities. About two thirds of the parents have more than ten books at home, and virtually all parents read to their children at least once a week, with more than half of the parents reading to their children three times a week or more.

Table 2.5 shows the availability of various types of literacy materials other than children's books in the homes of the children, as indicated by the respondents on the parent teacher questionnaire. It can be seen that for the literacy items which were specified in the questionnaire (i.e. magazines, comics, newspapers, and TV-guide), a majority of parents indicated not having those items available to their children, although a large majority of parents (38 out of the 47 respondents) also indicated having other unspecified literacy materials available (presumably including books etc.). Among the specified items, magazines were most often available (in 19 out of 47 homes), and comics most infrequently (in 12 out of 47 homes). In 20 out of 47 homes literacy related materials such as tv guide and comics were not mentioned as being available. Percentage of the homes where those materials are available ranges from 25.5% to 40.4%, whereas in the unspecified 'other' category, this portion is well above .50, indicating that other literacy materials were more often available than not.

Non-literacy related items such as crayons, finger paint, yarn, etc. were more often reported as being present than as not being present with a ratio of about two to one (See Table 2.6). All households except one reported having crayons and paper available, and a majority of parents reported having scissors, pasting materials, puzzles, paint, magic markers, and put-together toys available for their children. Less common were the availability of clay, play-dough, hammers, nails, woodscraps, yarn, thread, cloth, and make believe toys such as milk cartons.

TABLE 2.3

Reported Frequency With Which Parents Read to Their Children

Frequency	N
Daily	11
Less Than 3 Times a Week	13
Once a Week	3
More Than Once a Week	17
Never	3
Total	47

TABLE 2.4

Number of Books in the Home

NO. of Books	N
None	0
1 or 2	2
3 to 9	15
> 10	30
Total	47

TABLE 2.5

Availability of Literacy Related Materials at Home

	NO	YES	%
Magazines	28	19	40.4
Comics	35	12	25.5
Newspaper	29	18	38.3
TV Guide	34	13	27.7
Other	9	38	80.9
Average	27	20	42.6

As the table indicates, in these categories, households not having these latter materials outnumbered the households that have them by a ratio of two to one. On the average, aggregated over types of materials, households having non-literacy related materials significantly outnumbered those not having them. Rather than just indicating whether non-literacy materials were available, respondents could also indicate the non-availability of materials because they felt that the child was too young for those particular materials. Table 2.6 shows that some of the materials that were indicated as not being available to the child were not available because the child was seen as too young for those materials (e.g. hammers and nails, and yarn, thread and cloth). On the other hand, the availability of make-believe toys did not appear to depend on the age-inappropriateness of the material itself.

Table 2.7 shows parental involvement in different content areas (domains). The areas in which most parents were involved were helping the child write his or her name, teaching children to count, and teaching the alphabet, areas in which virtually all parents indicated involvement. It was more common for parents not be involved in activities such as word and concept learning, songs and nursery rhymes, although in each of those categories, parents indicating engagement still outnumber those not indicating engagement. Although children were most often seen as being too young for word related activities (14 out of 47), only five out of 47 were seen as being too young for concepts. There were also a substantial number of respondents who indicated that they found their children too young for number recognition, writing their own name, and memorizing their address and phone number. There does not appear to be an association between how many households indicated involvement in particular learning activities, and how many children were deemed too young to be engaged in those activities. For instance, although high parental involvement in name-writing is accompanied by a high number of children being too young, this is not the case for alphabet learning. Therefore, it is not likely that the parental involvement ratios are spuriously affected by the deemed age appropriateness of the activity.

The role of school related topics in parent-child interaction, as perceived by the respondents, is shown in Table 2.8. It can be seen that if stated in general terms (the first two categories in the table), all parents indicate being either daily or regularly engaged with their child in interactions concerning school matters, unless the child is seen as being too young. In more specific areas of concern, such as listening to the child read or discussing future goals and objectives, there still is a majority of respondents who indicate having regular discussions with the child about those topics. The parent-child interactions concerning homework conform to the same trends as those concerning other school related topics. However, contrary to the other interactions topics, it appears that the homework-items were not filled out by about half of the respondents.

On the whole, parents appear to have a positive view about their children's performance in the academic area, as Table 2.9 shows. Thirty five out of 46 parents indicate that their child is currently doing well or very well at school, and thirty-eight out of 46 respondents thought it very likely that their child would graduate from high school. However, parental aspirations beyond high school are more difficult to detect, as Table 2.10 suggests. Although there still is a significant majority of parents who expect their children to graduate from college, there are very few respondents who are specific about other possibilities, such as attending graduate school (30 parents did not answer), or about the possibility of no additional schooling (only two

TABLE 2.6

Availability of Non-Literacy Related Materials
(N=46)

	CHILD TOO YOUNG	NO	YES	%*
Crayons and Paper	-	1	45	97.8
Scissors	11	10	25	71.4
Scotch	7	12	27	69.2
Puzzles	4	17	25	59.5
Catalogs to Read and Cut up	4	11	30	73.3
Paints, Magic Markers	9	13	23	63.9
Clay or Dough	7	25	13	29.2
'Put-Together Toys' Like Legos	4	13	29	69.0
Hammers, Nails, Woodscraps	14	25	6	19.4
Yarn, Thread, Cloth	14	22	8	26.7
Make-Believe Toys (e.g. milk carton)	4	25	16	39.0
Plants	5	28	12	30.0
Average	7.5	15.8	21.6	57.8

* In computation of percentages, subject responding 'Child too young' were not considered.

TABLE 2.7

Parental Involvement in Child's Learning According to Content Area: Number of Parents Indicating Involvement in Each Activity

ACTIVITY OR DOMAIN	INVOLVEMENT			
	CHILD TOO YOUNG	NO	YES	%
Songs & Nursery Rhymes	1	11	35	76.1
Colors	0	8	39	83.0
Shapes	4	5	38	88.4
Write Name	6	2	39	95.1
Memorize Address & Phone	6	8	33	80.5
Count	1	3	42	93.3
Recognize Numbers	6	7	34	81.9
Alphabet	0	3	44	93.6
Letters	5	5	37	88.1
Words	14	11	22	66.7
Concepts	5	9	33	78.6

TABLE 2.8

Frequency of Occurrence of School Related Topics in Parent-Child Intervention

	Child Too Young	Daily	Regularly	Rarely	Never	Total
School Activities	4	30	13	0	0	47
School Studies	7	30	10	0	0	47
Child's Problems	11	17	15	2	2	47
Expectation School Performance	12	17	16	1	0	46
Future Plans and Goals	20	4	14	7	2	47
Listen to Children	22	10	9	2	3	46
Help Child with Homework	3	16	3	--	1	23
Check Child's Homework	3	18	1	--	0	22

TABLE 2.9

Parental Perceptions About Their Child's School Success

	Current Performance N	Likelihood High School Graduation	N
Very Well	17	Very Likely	38
Well	18	Somewhat Likely	7
About Average	7	Not Very Likely	1
Poorly	1		
Very Poorly	1	Probably	0
Don't Know	2		
	46		46

TABLE 2.10

Parental Expectations for Child's Level of Schooling

	Graduate from College?	Attend Graduate School?	Go to Trade School	No Schooling After High School?
YES	34	17	4	2
NO	6	0	2	0
NO Answer	7	30	41	44

respondents expected no schooling after high school, the other 44 respondents did not answer this item.

Finally, Table 2.11 shows how respondents saw themselves as teachers of their child. Overall, it seems that parents have a positive outlook on the pedagogical process; They were unanimous about really liking to teach their child something new, and the majority evaluated the pedagogical interactions between themselves and their children in a positive light. Table 2.11 shows the items themselves as well as the number of parents agreeing and disagreeing with each of the items included. Those items containing negative evaluation of the role of parents as teachers, and the role of children as learners were disagreed with by most of the respondents, while those which indicate the positive and constructive aspects of the pedagogical process were responded to favorably.

Discussion:

It is important to remember that the results reported above primarily serve as a baseline for the comparison of Even Start parents with their non Even Start counterparts, and to determine whether changes in attitudes toward education and literacy can be attributed to the program. In that regard, the results reported above should be seen as preliminary. Nevertheless, they clearly reveal a positive attitude of parents toward schooling and literacy.

In the absence of a comparison with other populations, however, it is not possible to determine to what extent the respondents in this population are 'involved', 'oriented toward literacy', or have high or low aspirations for their children. In order to characterize the population in this district, comparisons need to be made with other districts. Nevertheless, the results clearly indicate that the parents surveyed generally convey a positive attitude toward the education of their children.

Moreover, it needs to be considered that the respondents in this study consist of parents who were involved in the Even Start program on a voluntary basis, so that a factor of 'self selection' may play a part. Consequently, it may be that the attitudes of these parents are different from those who are not enrolled in even-start programs, or different from those who are not enrolled on a voluntary basis.

Furthermore, response set could be affected by social desirability factors. The results that are most likely to be affected by social desirability are the impression of high involvement, the favorable image parents convey of their role as teachers, and the aspirations that parents have in regard to the future of their own children. For example, in the items concerning parents' perception of their role as a teacher, those items which were 'positively stated' elicited high agreement rates, whereas those that were 'negatively stated' had high disagreement rates. It is possible that if these items were rephrased, a different picture would emerge.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that one of the most striking trends in these data is the absence of missing responses in almost all items except for a few, where about half of the parents 'defected'. An example is where parents were asked to indicate likelihood of failure of their children in succeeding. It could very well be that parents are reluctant to be pessimistic about the future possibilities of their children. However, if no response is obtained on particular items, we cannot infer a specific reason for lack of response on the basis of the nature of the question. It is possible that a comparison of these data with those for parents not enrolled in

TABLE 2.11

Parents' Perceptions of Their Role as Teacher

	Agree	Disagree
a. Much of my child's learning will take place before he/she enters Kindergarten or first grade.	40	4
b. My child needs to play with me.	44	3
c. Playing with my child makes me feel restless,	8	39
d. It is hard for me to tell when my child has learned something.	5	40
e. It is difficult for me to think of things to say to my child during play.	5	42
f. Playing with my child improves the child's behavior.	39	8
g. More of my child's learning at this age takes place by watching people and things rather than being told.	42	4
h. It is difficult for me to stay interested when playing with my child.	7	40
i. I scold my child when he/she doesn't learn.	7	38
j. I imitate my child's speech when we play so that the child understands.	19	24
k. My child learns by playing with other children.	43	4
l. If we play whenever my child wants to, not much learning will take place.	19	25
m. My child's learns by playing with other children.	41	5
n. I really like to teach my child something new.	47	0

Even Start, or with the results after one year of enrollment in the program might shed light on this issue.

In spite of these limitations, the data reveal a number of interesting trends. In terms of the availability of resources, it appears that literacy related materials are less widely available than non-literacy related materials. On the average, percentage of homes where literacy related materials are available is 43%, whereas this percentage is 58 for non-literacy related materials. It is quite possible that the availability of literacy related materials is depressed by the eventuality that the questionnaire probes for items which happen to be unavailable, whereas other items, not picked up, would have been widely available. For instance, the questionnaire does not ask for the availability of books including, for example, the Bible. The finding that the overwhelming majority of respondents indicates that they have reading materials of some form available seems to point in that direction. It is also important to point out that about two thirds of the parents read to their children at least once a week. Attempts to provide more continuity between socialization at home and elementary school education might focus on those parents who do not read to their children on a regular basis. Moreover, the availability of literacy materials, as well as the parents' own attitudes toward literacy, and their reading habits need to be assessed more extensively.

CHAPTER 3

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Although program effectiveness is often equated with successful outcomes, factors related to program implementation are known to influence successful outcomes. Programs typically evolve in stages, beginning with start-up planning, progressing to full implementation and eventual longer-term stability, with outcomes at each step related to features of the institutional setting (Zellman, 1981). Barriers to successful implementation are often related to problems with program supports in areas of funding, administrative support, staff development, and cooperative collaborations. In this Chapter, data will be presented from a questionnaire in which feedback from Even Start staff was solicited on various aspects of program implementation. Parent narratives are also included to provide a snapshot profile of program impact from the perspective of parent participants. Such feedback enables us to determine to what extent the factors identified above play a contributing role in the successful implementation of Even Start goals and objectives.

There are twenty-four staff members working with the Even Start program:

- a full-time project coordinator responsible for planning and implementation of the program at all three sites, who provides liaison with the Department of Education for national data collection, for grant renewal, and for monitoring activities;

- 3 part-time site coordinators who coordinate and supervise program activities at the school based sites.

- 3 teachers per site which include an early childhood education teacher, a parenting education teacher, and an adult education teacher; and

- 4 early childhood teaching aides at each site, who assist with the child care component to further the early childhood objectives of the program - namely to provide the children ages 2 to 7 with experiences which promote self-confidence and the development of motor, perceptual and cognitive skills.

All members of the staff were asked to complete self administered surveys in June 1991 (see Appendix A) to assess various aspects of the program structure and implementation. Seventeen completed surveys were returned.

Even Start staff were asked to rate the effectiveness of the component(s) with which they worked the most, and share their views in open ended questions about the importance of various program objectives. Likewise, in open ended questions, staff were asked to comment on various organizational features, like coordination at their sites, sharing of information between sites, recruitment of families, family/staff ratios, classrooms, facilities, and other administrative supports. The staff also reported on linkages with community resources, cultural sensitivity, program's effect on self esteem and on other program strengths or areas that need improvement. Finally, staff were asked to write additional comments they believed important for us to consider in the 1st year evaluation.

EFFECTIVENESS OF PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

Table 3.1 shows an average effectiveness rating reported by 17 Even Start staff members of 4 Even Start program components. At the 3 Even Start school sites. All reported that the program component(s) which they worked with the most were largely "very effective". It's important to note the likelihood of socially desirable answers when people are asked to evaluate a model program which they have strong commitments to. It's possible that various sites employed staff within or across program components in different ways.[1] Furthermore, the ways in which the programs were implemented may have varied across sites: Such differences were not examined in this first stage of evaluation.

Table 3.1

Effectiveness of Even Start Components Reported by Staff and by School

Ratings: 1 2 3 4 5 NE - Not Effective
(NE) (VE) VE - Very Effective

SCHOOL	ADULT BASIC SKILLS	PARENTING	PARENT/ CHILD TOGETHER	EARLY CHILDHOOD
QUITMAN (N=7)	4.5 (N=2)	5 (N=2)	4.5 (N=4)	4.4 (N=5)
DR. HORTON (N=3)	5 (N=3)	5 (N=3)	5 (N=3)	5 (N=3)
THIRTEENTH AVE.(N=7)	5 (N=1)	5 (N=1)	4.75 (N=4)	5 (N=4)

Table 3.2 shows comments to open ended questions on the effectiveness of various program objectives. Responses were classified as "positive" or "needs improvement". For example program objectives which showed themes of "peer support" and "interpersonal supports" were characteristic of positive implementation features and were categorized as follows:

Adult Basic Skills - seen as parent "nurturing";

Parenting Skills - peer support strategies were seen as supporting "mothers to mothers";

Parent/Child Together - seen as a reciprocal process - child teaches parent and parent teaches child;

---

[1]. It's not clear why three staff members at one site rated all 4 components when the question asked for staff to report on the area they worked with the most - i.e. either Adult Basic Skills, Parenting, Parent/Child Together, or Early Childhood.

TABLE 3.2

Even Start Staff Assessments of Program Objectives
(N=17)

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES	POSITIVE	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
ADULT BASIC SKILLS	Improve Literacy Skills; Improve Parent/School Communication; Improve Child's Achievement; Job Readiness Skills; Parent "Nurturing"; GED Preparation;	Provide Counselors for Emotional, Vocational and Community Living Services;
PARENTING SKILLS	Improve Home/School Learning Objectives; Improve Child Development Outcomes; Prepare Parents for Child Care Jobs; Help Parents Mature in Parenting Roles; Information Sharing of Community Resources; Peer Supports - "Mothers to Mothers";	
PARENT/CHILD TOGETHER	Informal Learning Together; Reciprocal Process - child teaches parent and parent teaches child; Enhances Child's Potential;	Strengthen Program for Parents and Children Together; How to Transfer The Learned Behaviors to Home;
EARLY CHILDHOOD	Prepares Child for Regular School; Peer Readiness Activities Enjoyed and Shared; Environment Conducive to Learning; Children learn How to Get Along with Each Other;	More Time Needed for Planning; Not Yet Fully Implemented;
OVERALL PROGRAM OBJECTIVES	Program is a Learning Experience for Both Parents and Children; Program is "Fellowship" between Parents, Children, and Staff; Strong Friendships were Developed; High Levels of Interest; Families Becoming an Extension of Our Own Families; Children, Staff, Parents are Given an Opportunity to Explore Computer Literacy Together; Good Rapport; Opportunities for Staff Development;	Parents' Attendance; Curriculum Not Clearly Defined; Provide More Special Projects for the Children; Bilingual Communication; More Public Awareness of the Program; Provide More Resource People for the Parents; Lack of Transportation Contributes to Attendance Problems; Helping Parents to Read More to Their Children;

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Early Childhood - seen as peer readiness activities enjoyed and shared;

Overall Program Objectives -

- o program is "fellowship" between parents, children, and staff; strong friendships were developed;
- o good rapport;
- o families becoming an extension of our own families;

Current theories suggest that educational success is related to communication which becomes reciprocal and interpersonal. At the current program implementation stage, staff responses indeed suggest that program interventions and strategies are positively influencing the nature of home/school linkages, although it is likely as yet premature to evaluate outcomes.

The assessment of issues around program objectives which were identified by staff as "needs improvement" were:

- o need to provide counselors for emotional, vocational and community living services to support the Adult Basic Skills objectives;
- o need to strengthen the program for parents and children together to support the Parent with Child Together program objectives;
- o develop strategies that will help to transfer parent with child learning activities from Even Start to the home;
- o more planning time needed by staff to meet Early Childhood Education objectives;

Areas identified as needing improvement and which are related to overall program objectives were:

- o parent attendance;
- o lack of transportation which contributes to attendance problems;
- o curriculum not clearly defined;
- o bilingual communication;
- o more public awareness of the program;
- o more resource people for the parents;
- o helping parents to read more to their children;

The "Needs Improvement" issues suggest problem areas that negatively impact on successful program implementation. Barriers to successful participation rates include attendance and transportation. Problems in family/school communication can be exacerbated by gaps in needed bilingual services. The absence of counseling and community services necessary to provide for basic needs of families illustrate the importance of reciprocal communication important to joint planning that values parent perspectives and needs beyond those directly related to education. These are examples of the anticipated as well as unanticipated implementation problems which can confound the results of special intervention programs designed to change both attitudes and behaviors.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

Tables 3.3A and 3.3B show answers to open ended questions on the effects of organizational features of Even Start on program implementation.

A common theme that occurs again across different organizational features was "peer support" and "interpersonal support". Responding to coordination at the 3 sites, staff reported that they work well together, learn from each other, and describe program coordination as "efficient and compassionate". The staff rated family/staff ratios as "adequate to good", noting that this allowed for personal interventions. The staff rated opportunities for sharing between sites as motivating and rewarding and as providing opportunities to exchange ideas, keep informed of changes and discuss new information, again indicating that communications did become reciprocal and interpersonal.

All 3 sites emphasized the importance of full administrative support from their building principals. All staff reported a positive impact of the needs provided daily for the children. However, as pertained to building facilities, responses were more mixed. Although the availability of classrooms allowed for program flexibility, needs for increased building security to protect equipment, needs for additional custodial services, problems arising from the constraints of sharing classrooms and transporting supplies, and problems around the building's heat and ventilation, indicate that conditions known to foster positive and safe environments conducive to learning are not adequately met.

Linkages with community resources were perceived as important and it was emphasized that many workshops were held to strengthen linkages. The Women, Infants and Children (WIC) nutrition program informed participants about eligibility for services; Channel 13, selective T.V. viewing workshop informed parents about selecting programs for their children and how to discuss T.V. and do followup activities. Other special projects with colleges, Project Reach, beauty care, fire prevention, Newark police department child identification program, prevention of child abuse resources, and visits to the library and museum were some of the linkages noted as important community resources and supports. The respondents recommended that more counseling and community resources be made available to help families find housing and jobs.

Parent Narratives:

Parent narratives written voluntarily by parents at all three Even Start program sites appear below. The narratives were written during the 1991 fall program for a newsletter to inform parents and the community about the Even Start program. The eight narratives provide a contextual perspective which captures the richness and importance of program effects for the

TABLE 3.3A

Even Start Staff Assessments of Program Implementation (Part A)
(N=17)

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION	POSITIVES	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
COORDINATION AT SITE	Keep Abreast of Program Needs; Ensure Smooth Running; Staff Works Well Together; Learn from Each Other; Things Must "Gel"; Coordinator's Role is Important; Coordination Generates Enthusiasm and a Learning Atmosphere; Important for Meeting Scheduling and Reporting Time Lines; Dissemination of Information; Deal with Problems;	
FAMILY/STAFF RATIOS	Rated Adequate to Good - Allows for Personal Intervention;	
SHARING BETWEEN SITES	Keeps Staff Informed of Changes and of New Information; Opportunities to Exchange Ideas; Motivating and Rewarding; More Learning Experiences for all; Assess How we Are Doing in Relation to the Whole Program;	Need More Networking Between Sites; Understand Better How Other Program Sites Work;
RECRUITMENT OF FAMILIES	An Important Role for Newly Appointed Community Aide; Recruitment is Mostly Effective by "Word of Mouth";	Should be Ongoing - as Families Leave, More Come; Recruitment is a Difficult Task; More Aggressive and Intensive Approaches are Needed; Should Notify Everyone Who is Eligible for the Program; Difficult to Do Outreach; New Community Aide Position Can Help with Recruitment and Follow up;

TABLE 3.3B

Even Start Staff Assessments of Program Implementation (Part B)
(N=17)

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION	POSITIVES	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
FACILITIES & ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORTS	Facilities Allowed for Flexibility Needed for Different Activities ; Full Support of Administration - all 3 sites; Meals provided for the Children;	Difficulty Sharing Classrooms and Transporting Supplies; Classrooms Can be Very Hot or Very Cold; Need Better Building Security to Store Equipment; Too Much Paper Work - all 3 sites;
LINKAGES WITH COMMUNITY RESOURCES	Many Workshops were Held to Introduce Parents to Services; The Community Aide (new) will Help Provide Linkages; Good Experiences from Community Resource People;	Needs for Counselors and Community Resources to Help Families with Housing and Jobs;
CULTURAL SENSITIVITY OF PROGRAM SUPPORTS AND CONTENT	Program responsive to Diversity of the Families Enhances Self Esteem; Different Resources Made Available; Black Role Models for Parents to Identify with;	Recruit More Spanish Speaking Parents; More Bilingual Staff - Language sometimes presents a Barrier;
STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT BEFORE AND AFTER EVEN START	Better Understanding of the Problems that Both Parents and Staff Encounter; See and Talk with Parents Regularly; Feel closer with Parents; Feel More Open to Parents; Perceive Parents as Partners Rather than as Adversaries; Learn from One Another; Parents and Staff Get Along Well; Relate to Parents More Like Peers; Parents Were As Interested in Helping Themselves as in Helping their Children Through the Program; Introduce Program at Parents' Rate of Acceptance; Peer Solutions to Problems;	

Even Start families. Clearly, the parents' own words provide a subjective context, but one which cannot be ignored. Its relevance lies in capturing the "program significance" that maps the social context of the program in participating families' lives. The information shared does add to a more accurate depiction of the interrelationship of various program features which are very favorably perceived by the parents.

I joined the Even Start Program the beginning of July, 1991. Since then I and my child have learned a great deal from the program. I've learned to understand my child much more than I already have by spending time and working with her in the program. My child has learned how to work with other children in a group and to tell a story that the teacher has read to her from a book and to be patient with other people. I have a problem with math and being in the program has helped me understand the math that I have problems with and understand it more clearly. I think the Even Start Program is a wonderful program for parents and their children and that more parents need to get involved to improve themselves and their child because the teachers are very patient and very wonderful working with you and your child.

Even Start has helped me to be a better reader and a better person to myself and to help my children. The program has very good teachers who help everyday. They help you a lot with extra work when you need it. The teachers are excellent with me and my children. I enjoyed going on a trip to the zoo. It was my very first time at the zoo. I had fun making puppets with the children and the teachers. I have been very thankful to the teachers and Even Start for helping me and my children.

As a new parent who joined the program in July, I am pleased with the program. I enjoy the activities we as parents do together and also, setting aside one day a week to work with our kids. I hope this program continues on because it is good for everyone involved.

The Even Start Program is a wonderful program to be in. When I started my son cried until he got used to it. He loves to come, he loves the teachers and schoolmates. He especially loves when they have homework to do. And all the different types of projects we do. It really helps me refresh my memory in reading and math and about the work today.

The Even Start Program has made my nieces eager to learn more. They are happy with their teachers. On days they don't attend Even Start, they act like they are there pretending one is the teacher and the other is the student. When we brought home the computer, they told their cousins that they could not touch the computer because they were not part of Even Start. So I told them they could use the computer. So they agree that their cousins could learn how to work the computer. My regrets about the program, I wish it had started 13 yrs. ago.

For me, Even Start has signified a lot, since it has helped me a lot with the English language. I've learned self-control when the girls make me lose patience, also to listen when they have problems. To help them with their homework. To have patience in difficult moments. As conclusion, Even Start has been of much learning and gain for me.

Hi! For a very long time I'd been looking for a place where I'd have the opportunity to learn English. When I heard about Even Start program I was very interested and said to myself, "I'm going to try it." In the four months that I've been with the program, I've learned a lot. I like the way my teacher works. Also, what I've learned has served to help my children with their homework. I'm very happy with this program and with the help of God I'm going to try to keep attending.

My opinion of the program is that it has served me of much use. I've learned a lot and it is a great help for me. The material is explained well and of great help for me. I'm very happy. I enjoy it a lot.

DISCUSSION:

Findings from data reported in this chapter by Even Start staff and Even Start parents on program implementation suggests that some important program features helped to improve continuities between home and school. For example, staff reported that the program was responsive to cultural diversity and noted the importance of Black role models for parents. In the area of "Needs Improvement", it was recommended that more Spanish speaking parents and staff be recruited into the program, and that problems around language barriers be addressed. It would be important to explore whether role expectations between home and school become more compatible as a result of more culturally sensitive Even Start interventions.

Several of the parents discuss how Even Start has helped them feel more confident as parents, more comfortable helping their children learn, and helped them improve their own academic and English language skills. An overriding value reflected in the parent narratives is the way in which Even Start has furthered cooperative and reciprocal home and school connections.

The survey results reported in this chapter can be used to modify program and to build upon areas of strength. Findings on program implementation suggest that Even Start staff have developed a better understanding of the problems that both parents and staff encounter, and that staff and parents feel closer and more aligned in relation to "family learning" objectives and possibilities. Staff and parents were more likely to perceive each other as partners rather than as adversaries. Staff report learning reciprocally from parents, relating to parents more as peers. Both parents and teachers perceived that parents became as interested in helping themselves as in helping their children through the program. Staff also felt more receptive to "pacing the program" according to parental rhythms, and see the program as generating "peer

solutions to problems". These findings suggest areas of reciprocity and continuity between home and school. Future evaluations need to determine whether such transitions have a positive effect on educational outcomes.

CHAPTER 4

PARENT SURVEY: PARENT ATTITUDES, RATES OF PARENT PARTICIPATION, AND PARENTS' RATING OF SCHOOL TO HOME COMMUNICATION

Do school level initiatives to involve parents actively in their children's learning have positive effects on the learning process and educational outcomes? Parent involvement is seen today as an essential component of effective schools. In order to plan for effective parent involvement that can best benefit students, schools and family learning, it is important to understand how parents get involved and how schools involve parents in their children's educational experiences. However, few studies appear to have focussed on urban schools which are often characterized as having populations of mostly disadvantaged students and parents who are difficult to reach.

Dauber and Epstein (1989) report on an action research project conducted in eight Chapter I schools in Baltimore with data from over 2,000 parents, and a better than 50% return rate. The representative sample included more single parents, more parents without a high school diploma, and larger family sizes than the national average. The research found that, regardless of family demographics and socio-economic factors, the best predictors of active parent involvement both at home and school are school and teacher practices that encourage parent involvement. Their findings suggest that school practices have the strongest effect on parents becoming involved in their children's learning. Parents consistently report wanting schools to provide guidance to them on how to help their children with learning and homework at home (Dauber and Epstein, 1989).

PARENT SURVEY:

In the present survey, we will report on parent involvement, frequency of parent participation, and parents' rating of school effectiveness on parent participation. The measures used were taken from the Hopkins surveys of School and Family Connections (Epstein and Becker, 1987).

Even Start And Non-Even Start parent responses will be compared within the context of:

1. The 5 major types of parent involvement practices identified by Epstein and Becker (1987);
    a. basic obligations of parents (home conditions for learning);
    b. basic obligations of schools (school-to-home communications);
    c. parent involvement at school;
    d. parent involvement in learning activities and homework;
    e. governance, decision-making and advisory roles for parents;
2. The Cervone and O'Leary framework (1982) interprets parent

involvement practices along the continuum from passive to active. The criteria used by Cervone and O'Leary to identify active versus passive roles is threefold: that the flow of communication from school to home is frequent; that planned strategies be carried out by teachers to help parents be actively involved; and that there is some assessment by teachers of there own readiness to engage parents as active partners.

RESPONDENTS:

The parent surveys were self administered during June 1991. The surveys were completed by 34 parents who participated in the Even Start program in the Spring of 1991 and by 132 parents of children who did not participate in Even Start, but whose children attended grades pre-k, kindergarten, grade 1 or grade 2 at the 3 schools where the Even Start programs were located. Almost all parents who were attending the Even Start program in June 1991 responded. The response rate from surveys returned by Non Even Start parents varied from 37% at 13th Avenue, 43% at Quitman St.,to 53% at Dr. Horton. Since approximately 40% of parents participating at Dr. Horton are bi-lingual and Spanish speaking, 53% of the comparison group of parents surveyed at Dr. Horton were parents of children in grade 1 and grade 2 bilingual classes. Although Spanish translations of the survey were offered, no requests were made for the surveys to be administered in Spanish.

SURVEY FORMAT:

The 3 measures appear as Q1 (13 items), Q2 (18 items), and Q3 (9 items) in the parent survey which is reproduced in Appendix A. The findings presented below will refer to these measures as:

QUESTION 1.	includes 13 items on parents' attitudes toward school and parent involvement.
QUESTION 2.	includes 18 items that assess the frequency of parent participation at home and school. The scale is reported to have a reliability of .81 (Dauber and Epstein, 1989, p.19).
QUESTION 3.	includes 9 items on parents' rating of schools' effectiveness on various types of parent involvement at home and at school. The scale is reported to have a reliability of .81 (Dauber and Epstein, 1989, p.19).

FINDINGS:

Table 4.1 presents a profile of the families participating in the survey. There were no significant differences between the Even Start and Non Even Start families on the following characteristics:

TABLE 4.1

Profile of Families Participating in Survey

	Even Start Families (N=34)	Non Even Start Families (N=132)
Survey Respondent		
Mother	85%	88%
Father	3%	4%
Aunt	6%	--
Uncle	--	1%
Grandmother	6%	6%
Other Relative	--	1%
Schools		
Dr. Horton	29%	49%
Quitman	35%	23%
13th Ave	35%	28%
Number of Children Attending School Above		
1 Child	38%	39%
2 Children	41%	31%
3 Children	14%	14%
4 Children	7%	10%
5 or more	--	4%
6 or more	--	2%
Grade of Youngest Child at School		
Pre K	33%	5%
Kindergarten	26%	44%
Transitional Kindergarten	--	2%
1st. Grade	26%	24%
2nd Grade	4%	24%
3rd. Grade	7%	--
Education of Respondent		
Did Not Complete High School	44%	37%
Completed High School	27%	33%
Beyond High School	29%	30%
Employment Status of Respondent		
Work at Home	61%	57%
Part time Employment	9%	9%
Full time Employment	17%	34%

Most respondents, both Even Start and Non Even Start were mothers (85% Even Start, and 88% Non Even Start).

The percentage of Even Start parents participating at the 3 sites was relatively the same: 29% Dr. Horton,, 35% Quitman, and 35% 13th Avenue. Although differences are not statistically significant, the number of Non-Even Start parents who completed and returned the survey was greater from Dr. Horton 49% (65 surveys), than from Quitman 23% (30 surveys), or 28% from Thirteenth Ave. (37 surveys).

79% of the Even Start parents reported that they had 1 or 2 children attending the school and 70% of the Non Even Start parents reported 1 or 2 children attending this school.

Considerable differences between the two groups did occur on grade level of the youngest school aged child for whom the survey was completed: 33% of the Even Start children were attending Pre K as compared with only 5% of the Non-Even Start children. More Non-Even Start children were attending Kindergarten than were Even Start Children - 44% compared with 26%. Since eligibility for Even Start participation was determined as age two, clearly the program has attracted children at the earlier age levels.

A higher percentage of Non-Even Start children was attending the higher grade levels. 24% of Non Even Start children were either 2nd or 3rd graders, whereas only 11% of Even Start children were at those grade levels. These differences are related to the Even Start program goals that target early childhood intervention. The comparison sample of children was older, with minimum ages of the children likely to be closer to 4 yrs of age, than younger. Even Start program invited 2 and 3 year olds to participate.

Principal Factor Analysis was carried out on the items within each of the three measures. This statistical procedure was carried out to discover "latent traits" or common themes that would help to describe parental involvement characteristics for this particular sample of 161 respondents. The unweighted least squares extraction method was used which does not require assumptions of normality, and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMC) measure of sampling adequacy was calculated to support the use of the factor analysis method. The least squares extraction with a varimax rotation was used.

QUESTION 1: PARENT ATTITUDES ABOUT THEIR CHILD'S SCHOOL AND ABOUT PARENT INVOLVEMENT:

Table 4.2 shows results of the Principal Factor Analysis on the 13 items in Question 1. Parents' attitudes about their child's school and about parent involvement clustered around 4 factors, which together accounted for 63.9% of the variance for the 161 responses. There were 11 questions which loaded significantly on these four factors. (A middling value of .7557 for the KMO or Kaiser-Meyer Olkin measure of sampling adequacy suggests we can comfortably use the factor method.)

The first factor pertains to the theme of SCHOOL CLIMATE. It contains items 1.1 thru 1.6., with factor loadings that range from a high of .79543 to a low of .51484. An average mean above 3.24 (on likert scaled items with values that ranged from 1 to 4) reflects positive agreement overall in parents' perceptions that their child's school is a very good school; a good

TABLE 4.2

Factor Analysis: Parent's Attitudes about their Child's School and About Parent Involvement (N=161)

	Loading	Mean	S.D.
Factor I (School Climate)			
Items			
1.1 This is a very good school.	.79543	3.14	.635
1.2 This school is a good place for students and for parents.	.69160	3.17	.697
1.3 The teachers care about my child.	.67572	3.35	.576
1.4 I feel welcome at the school.	.67322	3.37	.570
1.5 My child is learning as much as he/she can at this school.	.52319	3.14	.796
1.6 My child likes to talk about school at home.	.51484	3.30	.635
Factor II (Helping Child with School Work)			
Items			
1.7 I feel I can help my child in reading.	.77512	3.48	.574
1.8 I feel I can help my child in math.	.76042	3.41	.609
Factor III (Expectations of Schools)			
Items			
1.9 My child should get more homework.	.98380	3.03	.7176
Factors IV (Freq. of Parental Involvement)			
Items			
1.10 Parents get involved more in the younger grades.	.54940	3.01	.755
1.11 Many parents I know help out at the school.	.50091	2.63	.764

place for students and for parents; that teachers care about their child; they feel welcome at the school; and their child likes to talk about school at home.

The second factor pertains to the theme of HELPING YOUR CHILD WITH SCHOOL WORK. It contains items 1.7 and 1.8, with factor loadings of .77512 and .76042. An average mean above 3.44 reflects agreement that parents feel they can help their child in reading and in math.

The third factor suggests a theme of PARENT EXPECTATIONS OF SCHOOL. It contained only one item with a factor loading of .9830. Again a mean of 3.03 shows that parents overall agree that their child should get more homework.

The fourth factor identifies a theme related to the FREQUENCY OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT. It contains items 1.10 and 1.11 with factor loadings of .54940 and .50091 respectively. An average mean of 2.80 shows a tendency toward agreement that parents get involved more in the younger grades, and that many parents they know help out at the school. The item 1.11 split on FACTOR 1 (with a value of .3413), which suggests that the item "many parents they know help out at school" has common features with "frequency" but also with the "school climate/environment".

Overall, the factor analysis suggests that 4 common themes characterize parental involvement for this particular sample of 161 respondents. These factors address at least 3 of the 5 major types of parent involvement practices identified by Epstein and Becker (1987). The 2nd and 4th themes relate to basic obligations of parents; the 1st and 3rd theme relate to basic obligations of schools; and the 2nd factor relates to involvement in learning activities and homework. None of the factors seem directly related to two other types of parent involvement practices identified by Epstein and Becker - parent involvement at school, or governance, decision-making and advisory roles for parents.

It is difficult to directly match these themes along the Cervone and O'Leary "Parent Involvement Continuum" of parents as active to passive participants and caution is advised in making interpretations based upon such a limited sample and the possiblities for multiple interpretations of the questions as posed. However, the second theme which includes 2 items that specifically are parent teaching activities is consistent with the practice of parents as "active" participants in the education process.

Caution is advised in directly drawing implications about these themes as they relate to issues of continuity, reciprocity and effective communication between home and school. Factor analysis can only be used to locate common themes in an exploratory fashion since the terms have not been well defined, and since our interpretations are clearly speculative. However, we might interpret that high average means on factors which show parents' perceptions as positive on "school climate", "helping child with school work", and "frequency of parental involvement", suggest continuity and practices that promote linkages and congruence between families and schools (Powell, 1989, p.24).

On the other hand, there were findings which suggest discontinuity, and reflect parent expectations somewhat different from school practices. Parents tend to believe that their children should get more homework. The preferred expectations for more homework might be suggestive of "high" educational expectations that these predominantly low socio economic urban families have for their children, expectations which parents perceive as not being met.

replicable. *Modifications of the measures* can serve to clarify and more carefully operationalize the meaning of concepts to enable more valid and reliable assessment of parent involvement concepts.

Table 4.3 shows the comparison of Even Start and Non-Even Start parental attitudes on the factor items identified above. On the first factor, school climate, percentages were not significantly different for the two groups of parents surveyed on any of the items. Likewise, both parent groups show no sizable differences on the two items in Factor II - Helping Child with School Work. More of the Even Start respondents agreed to the items in Factor III and Factor IV - Expectations of School, and Frequency of Parental Involvement. However, a comparison of means, shown in Table 4.4 shows no significant differences for the two groups on any of the 4 factors.

Overall, the agreement between the two groups suggests that both the Even Start parents and the Non program parents have positive perceptions about their children's schools and about the values and importance of parent involvement. For example, both groups of parents are more likely to agree that they can help their children in reading and math, and believe the school environment is a good place and that they feel welcome.

QUESTION 2: FREQUENCY OF PARENT PARTICIPATION

Table 4.5 shows results of the Principal Factor Analysis on the 18 items of Question 2. Frequency of parent participation clustered around 5 factors, which accounted for 57% of the variance based on the 161 responses. Twelve items loaded significantly on these five factors with a middling sampling adequacy coefficient of .6790.

Factor I pertains to the theme of LEARNING ACTIVITIES WITH CHILD. It contains 3 items, 2.1 thru 2.3 with factor loadings that range from a high of .84851 to .63974. An average mean above 3.86 reflects frequencies between "one and two times" and "many times" on frequency of parent participation.

Factor II refers to the theme of FAMILY LITERACY. It contains 4 items, 2.4 thru 2.7, with factor loadings of .61073, .52749, .50280, to -.47588. The items indicate whether parents practice spelling or other skills before tests, whether parents listen to their child read, listen to a story their child wrote, or talk to their child about a TV show. Factor II is considered a bipolar factor since it has both positive and a negative loading of substantial values. This suggests that, although the items in the factor measure the same theme, the item with the negative loading measures the negative aspect of the trait. It seems possible that "talking to a child about a TV show" is a literacy activity less related to formal learning skills and more related to recreational/informal learning than the other 3 items. An average mean of 3.4 for the 4 items suggests that parents are likely to participate at least once or twice during the year with their child in these family literacy activities.

Factor III loaded on the theme of COMMUNICATION WITH SCHOOL. It contains 2 items, 2.8 and 2.9, with factor loadings of .95062 and .53890. These items indicate frequency of parents visiting the classroom and talking with the teacher at school. Again, the average mean of 3.5 shows that parents are likely to participate at school in communicating about their child's learning.

Factor IV loaded on the theme of ACTIVITIES AND TRIPS. It contains 3 items, 2.10, 2.11, 2.12,

Table 4.3

Comparison of Even Start and Non Even Start Parents' Agreement On Parent Perceptions

		Even Start Sample (N = 34)		Non Even Start Respondents (N = 132)	
Factor I (School Climate)		**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Agree**
1.1	This is a very good school.	12%	88%	9%	91%
1.2	This school is a good place for students and for parents.	10%	90%	11%	89%
1.3	The teachers care about my child.	6%	94%	5%	95%
1.4	I feel welcome at the school.	3%	97%	3%	97%
1.5	My child learning as much as he/she can at this school.	16%	84%	17%	83%
1.6	My child likes to talk about school at home.	9%	91%	8%	92%
Factor II (Helping Child with School Work)					
1.7	I feel I can help my child in reading.	3%	97%	2%	98%
1.8	I feel I can help my child in math.	9%	91%	5%	95%
Factor III (Expectations of School)					
1.9	My child should get more homework.	15%	85%	26%	7
Factors IV (Freq. of Parental Involvement)					
1.10	Parents get involved more in the younger grades.	18%	82%	25%	75%
1.11	Many parents I know help out at the school.	31%	69%	42%	58%

* Significant < .05

TABLE 4.4

Comparison of Mean Scores on Parent Perception Factors

	Even Start	Non Even Start	T-Value
School Climates	3.29	3.25	t = .34
Helping Child With School Work	3.52	3.42	t = .87
Expectations of School	3.21	2.98	t = 1.64
Frequency of Parented Involvement	3.00	2.76	t = 1.90

* $p < .05$

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Agree
4 = Strongly

TABLE 4.5

Factor Analysis: Frequency of Parent Participation (N=161)

Factor I (Learning Activities with Child)			
Items	**Loading**	**Mean**	**S.D.**
2 1 Check to see that child had done homework.	.84851	3.84	.485
2.2 Help child with homework.	.69225	3.84	.472
2.3 Talk to the child about school work.	.63974	3.89	.408
Factor II (Family Literacy)			
Items			
2.4 Practice spelling for other skills before a test.	.61073	3.32	.926
2.5 Listen to the child read.	.52749	3.47	.778
2.6 Listen to a story the child wrote.	.50280	3.05	.958
2.7 Talk to child about TV show.	-.47588	3.67	.685
Factor III (Communication with School)			
Items			
2.8 Visit the classroom.	.95062	3.46	.754
2.9 Talk with the teacher at school.	.53890	3.55	.685
Factors IV (Activities & Trips)			
Items			
2.10 Play games at home to teach child new things.	.59776	3.58	.728
2.11 Take child to the library.	.55909	3.53	.985
2.12 Take child on trips around the city.	.46218	3.22	.919
Factors V (Meetings and Special Events at School)			
Items			
2.13 Go to PTA/PTO meetings.	.64746	2.46	1.018
2.14 Go to special events at the school.	.60785	2.84	.960

with factor loadings of .59776, .55909, .46218 respectively. The items measure frequency with which parents report playing games, taking child to library or on trips around the city. An average mean of 3.11 suggests that parents are likely to participate in these activities and trips.

Factor V loaded on the theme of MEETINGS & SPECIAL EVENTS AT SCHOOL. It contains 2 items, 2.13 AND 2.14 with factor loadings of .64746 AND .60785. The items assess frequency of parents attending PTA/PTO meetings and special events at school. An average mean of 2.5 indicates that the frequency of parents participation fell somewhere between "not yet" and "a few times during the year" - a somewhat more unfavorable rate of occurrence.

In summary, the factor analysis carried out on the survey items in QUESTION 2 shows that 5 common themes characterize the measure to assess frequency of parent involvement based upon this sample of 161. The factors appear to address at least 3 of the 5 major types of parent involvement identified by Epstein and Becker (1987). Each of the factors refer to some aspect of involvement of the parents, and their perception of their obligations. Factor I and Factor II directly relate to "involvement in learning activities "; Factor III and Factor IV relate to "basic obligations of parents", and Factor V relates to "parental involvement at school". No factors relate directly to the other 2 types of practices in the framework borrowed from Epstein and Becker (1987) -"basic obligations of schools", or "governance, decision-making and advisory roles for parents".

At least 3 of the 5 factors in QUESTION 2 involve items that fall at the "active" end of the parent involvement continuum - and involve either parent as teacher activities, or practices of parent visiting the classroom or talking with the teacher (Factor III). Again, we might interpret that active roles taken by parents are more likely to suggest positive relationships to the school than negative, and more likely to reflect "continuity", and also "reciprocity" and "effective communication between home and school" through parent involvement practices which promote linkages and congruence between families and the school.

Table 4.6 compares the frequency of parent involvement behaviors of Even Start parents with those of Non-Even Start parents on QUESTION 2. The breakdown is presented for the Even Start parent population of 34 respondents and for the Non-Even Start sample of 128 parents. Significant differences were found on 5 items. On all 3 of Factor I items, "check to see that child has done homework", "help child with homework", and "talk with child about school work", the Non-Even Start frequencies were significantly higher for parent participation rates than for the Even Start sample. Caution is advised since the Even Start sample is small size. Other factors which may contribute to the differences in favor of the Non-Even Start respondents is the difference in grade levels of the designated child for whom the parent is responding on the questionnaire. As noted in Table I, Even Start children were more likely to be younger, i.e. more pre K children, as well as fewer 3rd graders. It is also conceivable that parents who become involved with Even Start may be more deficient in skills required to help their children with certain learning activities. Although, as previously discussed on Question 1 (Table 4.3), there were no significant differences between the Even Start and Non-Even Start parents on their perceptions about being able to help their child with reading or math, it is possible that these perceptions have not translated into parent/child learning behaviors for the Even Start population.

On one item of Factor II, FAMILY LITERACY, "listen to the child read", the Non-Even Start parents again reported higher rates. On the other 3 items, there were notable but non significant differences in favor again of the Non-Even Start parents.

Table 4.6

Comparison of Even Start and Non Even Start Parents' Agreement On Frequency of Parent Involvement Behaviors

		Even Start Sample (N = 34)				Non Even Start Respondents (N = 128)			
Factor I (Learning Activities with Child)		**Never**	**Not Yet**	**1-2 Times**	**Many Times**	**Never**	**Not Yet**	**1-2 Times**	**Many Times**
* 2.1	Check to see that child has done homework.	–	21%	6%	73%	–	1%	5%	95%
* 2.2	Help Child with homework.	–	15%	15%	71%	–	2%	5%	93%
* 2.3	Talk to the child about school work.	–	6%	12%	82%	1%	–	6%	93%
Factor II (Family Literacy)									
2.4	Practice spelling or other skills before test.	9%	27%	18%	46%	2%	20%	15%	63%
* 2.5	Listen to the child read.	3%	24%	15%	56%	–	14%	21%	66%
2.6	Listen to a story the child wrote.	3%	36%	21%	39%	5%	29%	22%	45%
2.7	Talk to child about a TV show.	6%	6%	18%	70%	2%	2%	20%	76%
Factor III (Communication with School)									
2.8	Visit the classroom.	–	18%	27%	56%	3%	6%	32%	59%
2.9	Talk with the teacher at school.	–	15%	27%	59%	1%	6%	29%	65%

* Significant < .05

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED: TABLE 4.6)

Comparison of Even and Non Even Start Parents' Agreement On Frequency of Parent Involvement Behaviors

		Even Start Sample (N = 34)				Non Even Start Respondents (N = 128)			
Factor IV (Activities & Trips)		**Never**	**Not Yet**	**1-2 Times**	**Many Times**	**Never**	**Not Yet**	**1-2 Times**	**Many Times**
2.10	Play games at home to teach child new things.	–	3%	25%	72%	4%	5%	23%	67%
* 2.11	Take child to library.	3%	27%	36%	33%	17%	43%	22%	18%
2.12	Take child on trips around the city.	11%	15%	27%	58%	7%	17%	29%	47%
Factor V (Meetings & Special Events at School)									
2.13	Go to PTA/PTO meetings.	15%	27%	36%	21%	22%	30%	31%	17%
2.14	Go to special events at the school.	3%	29%	27%	41%	9%	31%	32%	28%

* Significant < .05

On Factor IV, ACTIVITIES & TRIPS, the Even Start parents demonstrated higher rates of participation, with a significant difference occurring on "taking their child to the library". Again on Factor V, MEETINGS & SPECIAL EVENTS AT SCHOOL, the Even Start parents showed some higher, though not statistically significant, rates of parent participation.

Table 4.7, shows the mean scores for the two groups, which supports the findings above and show a significant difference in mean scores in favor of the Non-Even Start sample on the two factors related to learning activities with child and on family literacy dimension. The mean scores show a significant difference in favor of the Even Start sample on rates of participation in activities and trips.

QUESTION 3: PARENTS' RATING OF SCHOOL TO HOME COMMUNICATION

Table 4.8 shows the results of the Principal Factor Analysis for the 9 items in Question 3. Parents' ratings of school to family communication clustered around 2 factors, which together accounted for 45% of the variance. Eight items loaded significantly on the two factors with a middling sampling adequacy coefficient of .8548.

FACTOR I clustered on the theme COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS ABOUT CHILD'S LEARNING. It contains 3 items, 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 with factor loadings of .74853, .72422 and .67865 respectively. An average mean of 2.3 is close to the middle value of the scale and suggests that parents are more likely to rate the family/school communication about child's learning as "could be better".

FACTOR II clustered around the theme MODES OF SCHOOL COMMUNICATION. It contains 5 items with factor loading ranging from .71602 to .48711. An average means above 2.5 suggests a value between "could do better" and "does well".

Table 4.9 shows percentages for items in Question 3 - Parents' Rating of home/school communication. The breakdown is presented for the Even Start parent population of 34 and for the Non-Even Start sample of 128 parents. A significant difference was found on 1 item of FACTOR I - "explain how to check my child's homework". Sixty-three percent of Even Start parents responded by rating the school as "does well" on "explains how to check my child's homework". This frequency compared with only 37% of Non Even Start parents rating of "does well" on the same item. Although not statistically significant, 63% of the Even Start parents also rated the school as "does well" on gives ideas of how to help my child at home as compared with 54% of the Non-Even Start parents.

On FACTOR II, modes of school communication, the findings shown in Table 4.9 were mixed for the two groups. More Even Start parents rated the school as "does well" on 'invite me to programs at the school", and "tell me how my child is doing in school". However, the Non Even Start parents were more likely to rate the school as "does well" on "send home news about things happening at school", "have a parent-teacher conference with me", and "send home clear notices that can be read". Since one fourth of the Even Start parents rated the school as "does not do well" on "have a parent-teacher conference with me" and "send home clear notices that can be read", it is possible that the negative ratings could be interpreted as more activist concern and expression of dissatisfaction with the way these practices are currently being implemented.

TABLE 4.7

Comparison of Mean Scores on Frequency of Parent Participation

	Even Start (N=33)	Non Even Start (N=122)	T-Value
Learning Activities with Child	3.63	3.92	t = -2.80*
Family Literacy	3.13	3.41	t = -2.12*
Communication with School	3.41	3.52	t = -.75
Activities & Trips	3.39	3.02	t = 2.58*
Meetings and Special Events at School	2.86	2.59	t = 1.61

* $p < .05$

1 = Never Do
2 = Not Yet
3 = 1-2 Times
4 = Many Times

TABLE 4.8

Factor Analysis: Parents' Rating of School to Home Communication (N=161)

	Items	Loading	Mean	S.D.
Factor I (Communication with Parents about Child's Learning)				
3.1	Give ideas of how to help my child at home.	.74853	2.37	.846
3.2	Explain how to check my child's homework.	.72422	2.11	.888
3.3	Tell me what skills my child needs to learn each year.	.67865	2.39	.751
Factor II (Modes of School Communication)				
3.4	Send home news about things happening at school.	.71602	2.60	.737
3.5	Invite me to programs at the school	.51756	2.51	.821
3.6	Tell me how my child is doing in school.	.56716	2.49	.713
3.7	Have a parent-teacher conference with me.	.50480	2.39	.873
3.8	Send home clear notices that can be read.	.48711	2.68	.651

Table 4.9

Comparison of Even Start and Non Even Start Parents' Rating of School to Home Communication

What School Does:		Even Start Sample (N = 34)			Non Even Start Respondents (N = 128)		
		Does Not Do	Could Do Better	Does Well	Does Not Do	Could Do Better	Does Well
Factor I (Communication with Parents about Child's Learning)							
3.1	Give ideas of how to help my child at home.	13%	25%	63%	24%	20%	54%
* 3.2	Explain how to check my child's homework.	20%	10%	63%	35%	29%	37%
3.3	Tell me what skills my child needs to learn each year.	19%	22%	59%	14%	37%	50%
Factor II (Modes of School Communication)							
3.4	Send home news about things happening at school.	16%	29%	55%	12%	14%	74%
3.5	Invite me to programs at the school.	13%	13%	75%	21%	13%	67%
3.6	Tell me how my child is doing in school.	15%	15%	70%	10%	33%	56%
3.7	Have a parent-teacher conference with me.	25%	16%	59%	24%	15%	61%
3.8	Send home clear notices that can be read.	22%	13%	66%	6%	18%	76%

* Significant < .05

The 2 factors, FACTOR I and FACTOR II, again refer to 4 of the 5 major types of parent involvement practices - 1) basic obligations of school, 2) basic obligations of parents, 3) involvement in learning activities and homework, and 4) parent involvement at the school. None seem to explicitly address parent activist roles around school governance, decision-making and advisory roles.

Again, with caution advised to avoid over interpretation of the results based in exploratory studies such as the present one, we might propose that more frequent ratings of "does well" are suggestive of continuity, linkages and congruence between families and schools. However, the overall picture based upon the data presented on Question 3, shows, at best, "ambiguity" in parents' responses about the issues related to school communication with families about educational progress, events and ways in which the school engages parents as educational partners. Mean scores shown in Table 3.10 likewise show no significant differences between the two parent groups on COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS ABOUT CHILD'S LEARNING, and MODES OF SCHOOL COMMUNICATION. Both parent samples were more likely to report that schools overall could do better in these areas.

DISCUSSION OF THE INFLUENCE OF LANGUAGE, EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT ON THE FINDINGS:

The influence of potential mediating variables was explored to determine if certain variables such as language, education or employment might have an influence on the findings presented above. Findings suggest that neither language nor employment appear to affect parent involvement. Education levels did, however: Parents who had not completed high school, overall reported higher frequency of communication with school than those who did finish high school. In addition, Even Start parents who had not completed a high school education reported visiting the classroom or talking with the teacher at school more frequently than either Even Start parents with a high school education or Non-Even Start parents with or without a high school education. See Table 4.10 below for a comparison of means on Communication with School for the Even Start and Non-Even Start parents by educational level achieved.

Table 4.10

A Comparison of Means on COMMUNICATION WITH SCHOOL for Even Start and Non-Even Start Parents by Education Levels

FACTOR III Q.3	EVEN START PARENTS (Education)		NON EVEN START PARENTS (Education)	
	<12YEARS n=15	=>12YEARS n=19	<12YEARS n=46	=>12YEARS N=76
VISIT CLASSROOM TALK WITH TEACHER AT SCHOOL	MEAN 3.70 SD=.59	MEAN 3.18 SD=.79	MEAN 3.60 SD=.50	MEAN 3.47 SD=.64

DISCUSSION:

Findings show that parents who participated in this study and who voluntarily participated in the Even Start program, are less likely to have completed high school than their non-even start cohort. Even Start parents also report "listening to their child read" less frequently than Non-Even Start parents. Even Start parents report significantly lower participation rates in learning activities and family literary activities than the Non-Even Start parents. These lower participation rates may in part be a factor of the younger preschool ages of the Even Start Children.

Although the Even Start parents may be more lacking in the educational skills needed to help their children with learning activities, they may be benefitting from the program in ways that are preliminary to changing parent/child learning behaviors. It seems plausible that a positive home/school connection is happening since the Even Start parents who do not have a high school education (representing 44% of Even Start parents) report visiting the school more frequently or more frequently talking with the teacher than a similar cohort of Non-Even Start parents without a high school education. Again the issues seem to highlight the importance and complexity of developing effective strategies that can translate values which are supportive of parent involvement and positive home/school relationships into behaviors that enhance children's learning.

All parents believe that they can help their children with learning activities and report feeling welcome at their child's school. However, both parent groups report that schools could overall do better in communicating with parents.

CHAPTER 5

TEACHER SURVEY: TEACHER ATTITUDES, PARENT INVOLVEMENT PRACTICES, SCHOOL AND FAMILY OBLIGATIONS

The success of any program depends on the skills and commitment of those who implement it. Only when we have evidence of what school practices contribute to effective and successful parent involvement, can effective practices be incorporated into educational policy and planning to effect positive student outcomes. This chapter will report on findings from a survey conducted of teacher attitudes and practices related to parent involvement. Eleven Even Start teachers/staff who currently practice as classroom or basic skills teachers participated in completing the self administered questionnaire. Eleven Non-Even Start classroom teachers at the 3 program sites were asked to participate and serve as a comparison group.

TEACHER SURVEY:

Four measures on the teacher survey instrument, (See Appendix A,) were taken from the Hopkins surveys of School and Family Connections (Epstein and Becker,1987). Based on their early research in schools which serve educationally disadvantaged students, Epstein and Dauber (1989) identify 5 types of practices that relate to parent involvement. This framework includes 2 dimensions (1 and 2 below) which specifically relate to "obligations" or responsibilities parents and schools have and match with questions on the survey that measure aspects of family/school connections.

1. basic obligations of parents
2. basic obligations of schools
3. parent involvement at school
4. parent involvement in learning activities at home
5. parent involvement in governance and advocacy - decision making

The conceptual framework developed by Tucker, and O'Leary (1982) represents an attempt to operationalize parent involvement by identifying four types of parent involvement activities which are classified along a continuum ranging from passive to active roles: (REFER TO FIGURE 5.1).

1. reporting student progress
2. special events
3. parent education
4. parent as teacher

The discussion of findings will use both the Epstein and Dauber, and the Cervone and O'Leary frameworks where appropriate to 1) interpret findings within the context of reciprocity and effective communication between home and school; and to identify differences in teacher supports for parent involvement practices ranging from passive to active for the Even Start and Non-Even Start groups of teachers surveyed;

FIGURE 5.1

Parent Involvement Continuum

PARENTS AS PASSIVE PARTICIPANTS	Good News Notes	Open House	Welcoming Committee	
	60 Second Phone Calls	Audiovisual Presentations	Parent Bulletin Board	
	Star of the Week	Potluck Supper	Information on Community Resources Weekend Activities	
	Newsletter	Father's/Mother's/Sibling's Day	Information on Community Resources	
		Spring Fling	Lending Library (Book, Toy, Record)	Make and Take Workshop
		End-of-the-Year-Picnic	Classroom Observations	Teachable Moments
		The Gym Show	Workshops on Topics of Interest to Parents	Home Worksheets
	Call-In Times		A Course for Parents	Parents Teaching in the Classroom
	Parent-Teacher Conferences		Parent-to-Parent Meetings	Parents Objectives in the IEP
	Home-School Notebooks			
PARENTS AS ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS	(Parent Leaders)	(Parent Leaders)	(Parent Leaders)	(Parent Leaders)
	REPORTING PROGRESS	**SPECIAL EVENTS**	**PARENT EDUCATION**	**PARENT TEACHING**
	PARENTS AS PASSIVE PARTICIPANTS	→		**PARENTS AS ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS**

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copied from Cervone and O'Leary (1982,p.49)

RESPONDENTS:

Eleven Even Start teachers/staff who currently practice as classroom or basic skills teachers participated in completing the self administered questionnaire: 1 pre kindergarten teacher, 1 kindergarten teacher, 2 first grade teachers, 2 fourth grade teachers, 1 eighth grade teacher, 4 basic skills teacher, 1 computer education teacher.

Eleven Non-Even Start classroom teachers at the 3 program sites were asked to participate and serve as a comparison group; all were early childhood education classroom teachers: 1 was a pre-kindergarten teacher, 2 were kindergarten teachers, 1 was a transitional kindergarten teacher, 3 were regular 1st grade teachers, 1 was a bilingual first grade teacher, 2 were regular 2nd grade teachers, and 1 was a bilingual second grade teacher.

SURVEY FORMAT:

Question 1 of the teacher survey includes 13 items from the Epstein and Becker instrument on teacher attitutes toward parent involvement; Refer to Table 5.1.

Question 2 includes 17 items on basic obligations of schools. Refer to Table 5.2.

Question 3 includes 11 items on 5 different types of home-school activities and/or connections - such as workshops, communications, volunteers, information to parents and parent involvement activities; Refer to Table 5.3.

Question 4 includes 11 items on teacher assessments of basic obligations of parents; Refer to Table 5.4.

UNIVARIATE AND BIVARIATE ANALYSES:

Although the 22 respondents who participated in the 2 groups surveyed represent so few numbers as to preclude rigorous statistical analyses, patterns and trends will be identified in teacher attitudes and practices relating to parent involvement. Findings will be discussed using univariate and bivariate analyses of data from the 4 multiple measures used in the survey and interpreted in relationship to Even Start program goals and objectives and within context of school/family relationship issues of continuity, reciprocity and effective communication between home and school.

Univariate analysis describes the distribution of frequencies on the single item variables. The frequencies on items within measures 1 thru 4 are presented as percentages, are broken out for both the Even Start staff and the Non-Even Start classroom teachers. They are shown in tables 5.1 thru 5.4. Means and standard deviations for all items are provided (Appendix B).

Patterns of relationships between variables will be identified using bivariate analyses. Correlation coefficients provide a single measure to assess the extent to which any two items are associated and the strength and direction of that association.

QUESTION 1: TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARD PARENT INVOLVEMENT

On one item of Question 1, all 11 Even Start staff members selected the value "Strongly

Agree" for the item: parent involvement is important for student success in learning and staying in school. Refer to Table 5.1.

On a majority of the items in Question 1, namely 7 of 13 items, Even Start teachers agreed or agreed strongly more often than Non-Even Start classroom teachers.

> Five of these items included perceptions that the school has an active parent organization, that every family has some strengths that can be tapped to increase student success in school, that parents can learn ways to assist their children on school work at home, that parent involvement can help teachers be more effective with more students, that parents at this school want to be involved more than they are, and that compared to other schools this school has one of the best school climates for teachers, students and parents.

Despite the possibility that the Even Start staff is more likely to give socially desirable responses, their more frequent AGREE OR AGREE STRONGLY responses on teacher attitudes may also reflect their belief in the values and possibilities for active parent involvement and the possibilities to strengthen continuities between home and school for children's learning. That parents can learn ways to assist their children on school work at home is also supportive of reciprocity in teaching roles between the school and home environment.

A dilemma which instructional staff often experience or anticipate around additional and/or more time intensive responsibilities, along with requirements for additional competencies, is likely reflected in two patterns of responses identified below for both survey groups. Often assumptions may be made that someone else is already doing the job or should be, or additional competencies and/or compensations are expected, and are likely to be reflected in the following responses:

> On two of the Question 1 items, Even Start staff agreed or agreed strongly more often than the comparison group that teachers "cannot" take the time to involve parents in very useful ways, and that teachers need in service training to understand and implement effective parent involvement practices. On the other hand, the Non-Even Start comparison group more often agreed or strongly agreed on two items that some parents already know how to help their children on school work at home and that teachers should receive recognition or compensation for time spent on parent involvement activities.

Both the Even Start and the comparison group responded unanimously to 2 items with 100% of the 22 respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that parent involvement is important for good school climate and that parent involvement is important for student success in learning and staying in school. Agreement on these general values, although likely to reflect again a social desirability response, also is likely to reflect teachers' beliefs based on their daily teaching experience that parent/child/school connections influence children's learning and school experiences in very important ways that effect student performance and, ultimately, long term educational outcomes.

Bivariate correlations of items within and across the 4 questions show associations between Question 1 items and some items in the other 3 questions, demonstrating linear relationships that are statistically significant. Furthermore, relationships, which are statistically significant for the total 22 teachers/staff who participated in the survey, appear to change when calculated for

Table 5.1

Percent of Even Start & Non Even Start Teachers Agreement on Parent Involvement Attitudes

QUESTION 1	Even Start Staff (N = 11)		Non Even Start Teachers (N = 11)	
	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree
a. Parent involvement is important for good school climate.	--	100%	--	100%
b. Some parents already know how to help their children on school work at home.	27%	73%	18%	82%
c. This school has an active and effective parent organization (e.g. PTA or PTO.	64%	36%	80%	20%
d. Every family has some strengths that could be tapped to increase student success in school.	18%	82%	27%	73%
e. All parents could learn ways to assist their children on school work at home.	--	100%	18%	82%
f. Parent involvement can help teachers be more effective with more students.	--	100%	9%	91%
g. Teachers should receive recognition or compensation for time spent on parent involvement activities.	9%	91%	--	100%
h. Parents of children at this school want to be involved more than they are now at most grade levels.	27%	73%	36%	64%

(Continued)

Table 5.1 (Continued)

Percent of Even Start & Non Even Start Teachers Agreement on Parent Involvement Attitudes

QUESTION 1	Even Start Staff (N = 11)		Non Even Start Teachers (N = 11)	
	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree
i. Teachers cannot take the time to involve parents in very useful ways.	64%	36%	91%	9%
j. Teachers need in-service training to understand an implement effective parent involvement practices.	9%	91%	18%	82%
k. Parent involvement is important for student success in learning and staying in school.	--	100%	--	100%
l. At the grade level I teach, family and school connections are important on topics such as drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy, and drop out prevention.	27%	73%	27%	73%
m. Compared to other schools, this school has one of the best school climates for teachers, students, and parents.	11%	89%	56%	44%

the two samples compared in the analysis. As the sample size is halved, the correlations are likely to become more unstable. However, patterns do emerge which seem somewhat consistent across measures. Replication with larger samples is proposed to validate patterns and trends which this data may suggest and will be incorporated hopefully into a larger study to examine effectiveness of parent involvement in Chapter I programs district-wide.

Correlations for the total sample of 22 staff surveyed show 3 items which highly correlated with agreement that all parents can learn ways to assist their children on school work at home:

1. agreement that parent involvement can help teachers be more effective with more students (.7310)
2. agreement that teachers can provide activities that parents and children can do to improve school work at home (.6092);
3. agreement that teachers can ask parents to listen to or discuss a story or paragraph that children write (.5777);

Even Start Staff:

When correlations are looked at separately for the two groups, we find that, for the Even Start sample of 11 teachers, 6 items correlated highly with agreement that parents can learn ways to assist their children on school work at home:

1. agreement that parent involvement is important for good school climate (.7698);
2. important for teachers to provide specific activities that parents and children can do to improve school work at home (1.000);
3. important for teachers to assign homework that requires children to interact with parents (.7674);
4. important for parents to talk to children about what they are learning in school (.7698);
5. important for parents to help children practice skills like spelling, vocabulary,etc. (.7698).
6. important for parents to talk to teachers about problems the children are facing at home (.7223).

Non-Even Start Staff:

The correlations shift when computed for the Non-Even Start staff. For the Non-Even Start sample (11 teachers), only 2 items correlated highly with agreement that parents can learn ways to assist their children on school work at home:

1. agreement that every family has some strengths that can be tapped (.7674);
2. disagreement that family and school connections are important on topics such as drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy, and dropout prevention (-.8068).

Caution is advised to not "over interpret" these findings and the need to replicate with larger samples is emphasized to validate patterns and trends which this data may suggest. However, implications are consistent with Even Start program assumptions that the Even Start Program teachers who become more experienced with a parent involvement model which provides community and educational networking opportunities for more comprehensive parent involvement, will translate these values into more concrete strategies that support home/school learning partnerships.

The negative correlation that occurs for the Non-Even Start sample which associates strong agreement that parents can learn ways to assist children on school work with disagreement that family and school connections are important on topics such as drug and alcohol abuse may be suggestive of "discontinuities" between academic learning and family/social problem issues. These more mixed findings for the Non-Even Start teaching sample may reflect lack of experience, skills, or training to implement or actively support the parent involvement practices which include community networking. (The correlation for the Even Start sample here was only .0211).

Differences in program effects (including more anticipatory needs of the Non-Even Start sample for in service training around parent involvement) seem supported by other findings for the two samples, like the significant correlation for the Non-Even Start sample that teachers need in-service training to understand and implement effective parent involvement practices with agreement that parent involvement is important for student success in learning and staying in school (.7698).

QUESTION 2: BASIC OBLIGATIONS OF SCHOOLS

On 5 items, both groups responded unanimously to practices as "important" in a series of questions asking teachers to choose among many worthwhile activities to assist their students and asked, what parent involvement activities are most important for teachers to conduct AT THEIR GRADE LEVEL. Refer to Table 5.2. Both groups were unanimous in identifying as "important"practices the following Basic Obligations of Schools:

1. conducting conferences with all parents at least once a year;
2. contacting parents about students' problems or failure;
3. informing parents when children do something very well,
4. asking parents to listen to children read;
5. asking parents to listen to or discuss a story or paragraph that children write.

These 5 areas of unanimous agreement likely reflect teachers pedagogical beliefs that children's learning is very much a shared responsibility between home and school, suggesting the possibility that teachers more likely agree than differ on some fundamental principles about home/school communications. However, these similarities may not in fact translate into practice.

Even Start Staff:

Findings related to frequencies for the two groups of program and non program staff show that on only 1 of 17 items in the school level responsibilities question did more Even Start teachers respond "important" or "very important" than the Non-Even Start teachers. Even Start teachers were more likely to agree that attending evening meetings, performances and workshops was an important parent involvement practice. Refer to Table 5.2.

Non-Even Start Staff:

More Non-Even Start staff than Even Start staff responded on 7 of 17 items "Important or Very Important" for school level responsibilities: To participate in parent-teacher-student clubs or activities; to inform all parents of the skills required to pass each subject

TABLE 5.2

Percent of Even Start & Non Even Start Teachers' Agreement on Basic Obligations of Schools

QUESTION 2

How important is this practice to you?	Even Start Staff (N =11)		Non Even Start Teachers (N = 11)	
	Not Important	Important	Not Important	Important
a. Conduct conference with all parents at least once a year.	--	100%	--	100%
b. Attend evening meetings, performances, and workshops.	9%	91%	44%	56%
c. Contact parents about students' problems or failure.	--	100%	--	100%
d. Participate in parent-teacher-student clubs or activities.	27%	73%	18%	82%
e. Inform parents when children do something very well.	--	100%	--	100%
f. Involve some parents in the classroom.	9%	91%	10%	90%
g. Inform all parents of the skills required to pass each subject at your grade level.	9%	91%	--	100%
h. Inform parents how report card grades are earned.	10%	90%	9%	91%
i. Provide ideas to help parents talk with their children about school work at home.	9%	91%	--	100%

(CONTINUED)

Table 5.2 (Continued)

Percent of Even Start & Non Even Start Teachers' Agreement on Basic Obligations of Schools

QUESTION 2

How important is this practice to you?	Even Start Staff (N =11)		Non Even Start Teachers (N = 11)	
	Not Important	Important	Not Important	Important
j. Provide specific activities that parents and children can do to improve school work at home.	--	100%	9%	91%
k. Provide ideas for discussing specific TV shows.	46%	54%	18%	82%
l. Assign homework that requires children to interact with parents.	18%	82%	9%	91%
m. Suggest ways to practice spelling or other skills at home before a test at school.	--	100%	9%	91%
n. Ask parents to listen to children read.	--	100%	--	100%
o. Ask parents to listen to or discuss a story or paragraph that children write.	--	100%	--	100%
p. Provide quidelines for discussing current events at home.	36%	64%	9%	91%
q. Work with other teachers to develop parent involvement activities and materials.	36%	64%	27%	73%

at the grade level; to provide ideas to help parents talk with their children about school work at home; to provide ideas for discussing specific T.V. shows; to assign homework that requires children to interact with parents; to provide guidelines for discussing current events at home; and to work with other teachers to develop parent involvement activities and materials.

Some possible difficulties related to reliability of the question as posed became apparent. In addition to small sample sizes, the different findings for the two samples on these school level responses may be attributable to the phrasing of the question. Since all staff were asked to answer these items as they relate to their grade levels, it is possible that the Non-Even Start teachers who are all early childhood teachers prioritize "basic obligations of the schools" in the context of early childhood classroom objectives. Even Start teachers may have interpreted these school level responsibility items from multiple perspectives which include but are not limited to Even Start experience. The different nature of teaching responsibilities for the Even Start and Non Even Start groups may compromise the reliability of the responses, since teachers using their own educational specialties to respond from, may perceive the "giving of suggestions and ideas to parents" differently. These questions may have substantially different meanings for expectations at early childhood grade levels (i.e. 100% of the Non Even Start comparison group taught pre-K to grade 2) in contrast with the expectations of the Even Start staff who represent more varied grade and special skills' experiences (8 of 11 Even Start Staff have other than early childhood classroom teaching responsibilities, and all 11 experience the opportunities for team planning and decision making through the Even Start program).

How Well Does the Data Fit the Framework: Passive to Active Roles:

If we look at Question 2, (items appear in Table 5.2) Basic School Obligations, using the parent involvement framework that identifies a continuum of parent involvement activities from passive to active roles, only 4 of the 17 items in this survey question clearly fall at the active end of the continuum. The criteria we used to identify active versus passive roles is based on 3 requirements cited by Cervone and O'Leary (1982);

1) that the flow of communication from school to home is frequent;
2) planned efforts or strategies are carried out by teachers to help parents be actively involved ;
3) there is some teacher assessment of their own readiness to engage parents as active partners;

The 4 of 17 items from this survey question which appear to meet at least 2 of the 3 criteria were:

1. contact parents about students' problems or failure;
2. involve some parents in the classroom;
3. assign homework that requires children to interact with parents;
4. work with other teachers to develop parent involvement activities and materials;

Contact Parents About Problems: Even Start Staff

Five significant correlations were found for Even Start staff with the item "contact parents about students' problems or failure" and included:

1. attend evening meetings, performances, and workshops (.7454);
2. inform all parents of the skills required to pass each subject at your grade level (.8850);
3. inform parents how report card grades are earned (1.0000);
4. provide ideas to help parents talk with their children about school work at home (1.0000);
5. ask parents to listen to or discuss a story or paragraph that children write (1.0000);

These 5 significant correlations suggest active, ongoing and reciprocal communications. However, caution is advised with these interpretations since no continuity, planned strategy or teacher commitment is "explicitly stated" in any of these. It is also recommended that these criteria which this study is using to differentiate active versus passive parent involvement be incorporated in modifications of the measures when this study is replicated with larger numbers for the Chapter I Parent Involvement Study.

Contact Parents About Problems: Non-Even Start Staff

On the other hand, only 1 correlation was significant for the Non-Even Start group with this same item "contact parents about students' problems or failure", namely to inform parents how report card grades are earned (.7455). This relationship appears less likely to require follow-up, continuity or reciprosity in communication with parents.

Involve Parents in the Classroom: Even Start Staff

Two significant correlations were found for Even Start staff with the item "Involve some parents in the classroom" and were:

1. Provide guidelines for discussing current events at home (.7966);
2. Work with other teachers to develop parent involvement activities and materials (.8545);

Involve Parents in the Classroom: Non-Even Start Staff

No correlations were significant.

Assign Homework That Requires Chilren to Interact with Parents:

Even Start Staff

One correlation was significant for the Even Start sample with "assign Homework that requires children to interact with parents:
Provide specific activities that parents and children can do to improve school work at home (.7674);

Assign Homework That Requires Children to Interact with Parents:

Non-Even Start Staff

No correlations were significant

Work with Other Teachers to Develop Parent Involvement Activities:

Even Start Staff

Three correlations were significant and were:

1. attend evening meetings, performances, and workshops (.6864);
2. involve some parents in the classroom (.8545);
3. provide guidelines for discussing current events at home (.8704);

Work with Other Teachers to Develop Parent Involvement Activites:

Non-Even Start

Five correlations were significant with "work with other teachers to develop parent involvement activities and materials.

1. participate in parent-teacher-student clubs or activities (.8333);
2. inform parents how report card grades are earned (.7360);
3. provide ideas to help parents talk with their children about school work at home (.6957);
4. suggest ways to practice spelling or other skills at home before a test at school (.7360);
5. provide guidelines for discussing current events at home (.7531);

It is plausible that Non-Even Start staff perceive greater anticipatory needs for preparation and collaborations around parent involvement planning and participation strategies -inform, provide ideas, suggest ways, and provide parents with guidelines. The differences in items which were significantly correlated for the two groups are suggestive that the Even Start staff incorproate responses more active parent participation strategies, like involving parents in the classroom, than passive ones, like receiving information, suggestions and guidelines.

Question 3: IMPORTANCE OF VARIED PARENT INVOLVEMENT PRACTICES

Question 3 asked teachers for their opinions about specific ways of involving families at their school. Teachers were asked to choose whether they considered each of 11 items as STRONG NOW, NEED TO IMPROVE, NEED TO DEVELOP, OR NOT IMPORTANT. Refer to Table 5.3.

On 6 of 11 items, Even Start staff more often responded that the type of involvement was "STRONG NOW" - percentages ranged from 18% to 46%. Refer to Table 5.3:

1. communications about report cards so that parents understand students' progress and needs (46% of Even Start staff contrasted with only 20% of the Non Even Start teachers).
2. communications from the school to the home that can be understood and used by all families (36% of Even Start staff contrasted with only 10% of the Non-Even Start teachers).
3. workshops for parents to build skills in parenting and understanding their children at each grade level (27% of Even Start staff compared with only 10% of Non-Even Start staff).

TABLE 5.3

Percent of Even Start and Non Even Start Teachers' Agreement on Home/School Connections

QUESTION 3	Even Start Staff (N =11) AT THIS SCHOOL				Non Even Start Teachers (N = 11) AT THIS SCHOOL			
TYPE OF INVOLVEMENT	Not Important	Need to Develop	Need to Improve	Strong Now	Not Important	Need to Develop	Need to Improve	Strong Now
a. WORKSHOPS for parents to build skills in PARENTING and understanding their children at each grade level.	--	36%	36%	27%	10%	50%	30%	10%
b. WORKSHOPS for parents on creating HOME CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING, and ways to support the school.	--	36%	46%	18%	10%	60%	20%	10%
c. COMMUNICATIONS from the school to the home that can be understood and used by all families.	--	18%	46%	36%	--	30%	70%	10%
d. COMMUNICATIONS about REPORT CARDS so that parents understand students' progress and needs.	--	18%	36%	46%	--	10%	70%	20%
e. COMMUNICATIONS in parent teacher CONFERENCES with all families.	--	9%	73%	18%	--	30%	60%	10%
f. VOLUNTEERS at the school to obtain and train parents.	73%	18%	9%	--	64%	27%	9%	
g. VOLUNTEERS in classrooms to assist teachers and students.	--	80%	20%	--	--	64%	27%	9%

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED: TABLE 5.3)

Percent of Even Start and Non Even Start Teachers' Agreement on Home/School Connections

QUESTION 3	Even Start Staff (N = 11)				Non Even Start Teachers (N = 11)			
	AT THIS SCHOOL				AT THIS SCHOOL			
TYPE OF INVOLVEMENT	Not Important	Need to Develop	Need to Improve	Strong Now	Not Important	Need to Develop	Need to Improve	Strong Now
h. INFORMATION TO PARENTS on how to monitor homework.	--	64%	27%	9%	--	20%	70%	10%
i. INFORMATION TO PARENTS on how to help their children with specific skills and subject.	--	45%	45%	9%	20%	20%	70%	10%
j. Involvement by more families in PTA/ PTO leadership, other COMMITTEES, or other decision making roles.	--	30%	70%	--	--	40%	40%	20%
k. Family-School programs for AFTER SCHOOL care, recreation, and home-work help.	--	20%	50%	30%	--	22%	67%	11%

4. workshops for parents on creating home conditions for learning, and ways to support the school (18% Even Start staff compared with 10% of Non-Even Start staff).
5. communications in parent teacher conferences with all families (18% Even Start with 10% Non-Even Start staff);
6. Family-school programs for after school care, recreation, and homework help (30% Even Start staff with 11% Non-Even Start);

On only 1 item did 20% of Non-Even Start teachers respond more frequently as "STRONG NOW" at this school to the item identifying involvement by more families in PTA/PTO leadership or other decision making roles.

On 3 of 11 items Even Start staff more often than Non-Even Start staff identified "NEED TO IMPROVE" for:

1. workshops for parents on creating home conditions for learning and ways to support the school (46% Even Start compared to 20% Non-Even Start);
2. communications in parent teacher conferences with all families (73% Even Start compared to 60% Non-Even Start);
3. involvement by more families in PTA/PTO leadership, or other decision making roles (70% Even Start compared to 40% Non-Even Start);

On 6 of 11 items, Non-Even Start staff more often identified "NEED TO IMPROVE" for:

1. communications from the school to the home that can be understood and used by all families (70% Non-Even Start compared to 36% Even Start);
2. communications about report cards so that parents understand students' progress and needs (70% Non-Even Start compared to 36% Even Start);
3. volunteers at the school to obtain and train parents (27% Non-Even Start compared to 18% Even Start);
4. information to parents on how to monitor homework (70% Non Even Start compared to 27% Even Start);
5. information to parents on how to help their children with specific skills and subjects (70% Non-Even Start compared to 45% Even Start);
6. family -school programs for after school care, recreation, and homework help (67% Non-Even Start compared to 50% Even Start);

The most frequent choice overall for both groups was "NEED TO DEVELOP" choices - with Even Start staff more often selecting "NEED TO DEVELOP" on 4 items:

1. volunteers at the school to obtain and train parents (73% Even Start compared to 64% Non-Even Start);
2. volunteers in the classrooms to assist teachers and students (80% Even Start compared to 64% Non-Even Start);
3. information to parents on how to monitor homework (64% Even Start compared to 20% Non-Even Start);
4. information to parents on how to help their children with specific skills and subjects (45% Even Start compared to 20% Non-Even Start);

Non-Even Start parents more often selected "NEED TO DEVELOP" ON 4 different items than those 4 chosen by Even Start teachers:

1. workshops for parents to build skills in parenting and understanding their children at each grade level (50% Non-Even Start compared to 36% Even Start);
2. workshops for parents on creating home conditions for learning and ways to support the school (60% Non-Even Start compared to 36% Even Start);
3. communications from the school to the home that can be understood and used by all families (30% Non-Even Start compared to 18% Even Start);
4. communications in parent teacher conferences with all families (30% Non-Even Start compared to 9% Even Start);

Those activities identified as "NEED TO DEVELOP" BY Even Start teachers appear to refer to more specific intervention strategies that teachers can transmit as effective learning strategies to parents, and may reflect a sequential step beyond the discussion, communication and dialogue more often identified by Non Even Start teachers. Those identified by Non-Even Start staff appear to reflect needs related to more general goals of parenting, communications from the school, and building home/school supports in general.

It would be difficult to discuss findings from Question 3 in terms of the active or passive parent involvement continuum. Information was not asked to permit interpretions about whether the criteria of frequency, planned strategies and teacher readiness for engaging active participation were at all explicit.

Again, although the numbers in this study are small, there is a rather consistent trend reflected by the data which suggests that Even Start program staff prioritize more non traditional active parent involvement roles and are more likely to recognize needs to implement concrete strategies that support parent involvement program goals and objectives.

The tentative findings based upon this limited survey would be strengthened by replicating the survey with other parent groups in the Newark School District. It would also be important to consider expanding on the Question 3 items with additional information that would allow for responses to reflect teachers' judgements applying the active or passive parent involvement continuum framework - using the criteria of 1) frequency, 2) planned strategies and 3) teacher readiness for active parent participation.

QUESTION 4: BASIC OBLIGATIONS OF PARENTS

This question contains 11 items for teachers to describe the importance of activities for which parents carry rsponsibilities for becoming involved in their children's education. Refer to Table 5.4. Teachers were asked to rate these items as NOT IMPORTANT, A LITTLE IMPORTANT, PRETTY IMPORTANT OR VERY IMPORTANT. Due to the small sample sizes the 4 value choices were collapsed into 2 - NOT IMPORTANT OR IMPORTANT.

Percentages in Table 5.4 show that on virtually all 11 items both Even Start and Non-Even Start staff almost unanimously considered parent responsiblities which support learning to be important. The items range from preparing children for school - i.e - sending children to school ready to learn and teaching children to behave well, to collaborations around learning practices - like parents asking teachers for ideas on how to help their children at home, talking with teachers about problems the children are facing at home, and helping children practice academic skills.

Question 4 items were overall highly correlated with each other, suggesting interrelatedness

TABLE 5.4

Percent of Even Start and Non Even Start Teachers' Agreement on Basic Obligations of Parents

QUESTION 4	Even Start Staff		Non Even Start Teachers	
Parents have responsibilities to:	**Not Important**	**Important**	**Not Important**	**Important**
a. Send children to school ready to learn.	--	100%	--	100%
b. Teach children to behave well.	--	100%	--	100%
c. Set up quiet place and time for studying at home.	--	100%	--	100%
d. Encourage children to volunteer.	9%	91%	9%	91%
e. Know what children are expected to learn each year.	100%	--	100%	--
f. Monitor homework.	--	100%	9%	91%
g. Talk to children about what they are learning in school.	--	100%	--	100%
h. Help children practice spelling, vocabulary, or other skills.	--	100%	--	100%
i. Ask teachers for specific ideas on how to help their children at home.	--	100%	--	100%
j. Talk to teachers about problems the children are facing at home.	9%	91%	9%	91%
k. Take children to places and events in the community.	9%	91%	--	100%

of the concepts involved. However, small sample sizes prevent the use of factor analysis as a method for identifying common underlying dimensions.

For the total group of 22, there were 6 items with significant associations within the Parent Obligations Question to the item that parents have responsibilities to send children to school ready to learn. These were that parents:

1. know what children are expected to learn each year (1.0000);
2. monitor homework (.9440);
3. talk to children about what they are learning in school (.5831);
4. ask teachers for specific ideas on how to help their children at home (1.0000);
5. talk to teachers about problems the children are facing at home (.8859);

For the Even Start sample we continue to see significant associations on four of the 5 items (1,2,4, and 5). Correlations for the Non-Even start staff shifted, and we to continue to find significant associations with only 2 items (1 and 2) above.

Overall, parent responsibilities for becoming involved in their children's education gets rated as very important by both groups surveyed (refer to Table 2.4). Further analysis however of the 11 items within the parental obligations measure show a large number of significant associations with items in Question #2 - a measure assessing basic obligations of schools. The item assessing importance of parental obligations for sending children to school ready was highly correlated for the total sample of 22 with 3 items from the basic responsibility that schools:

1. inform all parents of the skills required to pass each subject at grade level (.7798);
2. involve some parents in the classroom (.5892);
3. provide ideas to help parents talk with their children about school work at home (.6736);

For the Even Start staff, the importance of parental responsiblity for sending children to school ready was highly correlated with 6 items from the basic obligations of schools measure that schools have responsibilities to:

1. attend evening meetings, performances, and workshops (.7455);
2. contact parents about students' problems or failure (1.0000);
3. inform all parents of the skills required to pass each subject at your grade level (.8859);
4. inform parents how report card grades are earned (1.0000);
5. provide ideas to help parents talk with their children about school work at home (1.0000);
6. ask parents to listen to or discuss a story or paragraph that children write (1.0000);

For the Non-Even Start sample, no items from the parent obligations measure (11 items) are significantly associated with items in the school obligations measure (17 items). In fact, the negative, though non significant correlations between school and parent obligations for the Non-Even Start staff, may suggest that as Non-Even Start sample place more importance on the parental obligations, the less importance they place on obligations of the school.

DISCUSSION:

The presence of significant associations between items in the parent obligations and items in the school level obligations for the Even Start staff is an important finding, even though based upon a small sample, and is suggestive of continuity, reciprosity and congruity between school and home responsibilities for learning. Associations between these items did not remain significant for the Non-Even Start sample. Overall, the Even Start teachers, who have become more experienced with a parental involvement model, speak of translating these values into more concrete strategies and also more active parent participation roles. It is important to note, however, that the teachers who volunteered to teach in the Even Start program did so on a voluntary basis and so, may in fact, reflect attitudes to begin with that are different from those teachers who chose not to participate in the program.

For the Non-Even Start staff, the survey item assessing the belief that parent involvement is important for student success in learning and staying in school was significantly correlated with the survey item assessing the need for in-service training to understand and implement effective parent involvement practices. This relationship is likely suggestive of the additional skills and strategies which parent involvement requires of classroom teachers, above and beyond traditional teaching roles and responsibilities. Both groups recognize a need to develop more parent involvement practices.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

The goals of Even Start are to help parents become knowledgeable and confident partners in the educational experiences of their children; to help children develop their fullest potential as early learners through direct instruction and through activities which develop the parent's role as the child's first teacher; and to help parents become skilled learners and teachers of their children by improving literacy skills and help with English fluency.

It is important to emphasize the preliminary nature of the present survey. The findings are intended to serve as a baseline for identifying and tracking program areas of strength and weakness. The longer range objectives are to incorporate more predictive strategies to determine whether parent changes in attitudes and practices toward education and literacy can be attributed to the Even Start program, and whether achievement differs for program and non-program children. It is important to note that both the families and teachers who are participating in the Even Start program are involved on a voluntary basis, so that self selection is likely to influence the findings. Social desirability factors may play a role as well.

Summary of Findings:

Nevertheless, in spite of these limitations, the findings from this first stage evaluation give us some indications that Even Start parents and program staff convey positive attitudes and some difference in practices around parent involvement. Findings served to compare the effects of the Even Start program for parents and teachers in settings where comparisons were able to be made with and without special program interventions. The findings can be summarized as follows:

1. The Parent-Child Interactions and Parent as a Teacher instrument show that Even Start parents who were administered this measure as a part of the National Evaluation Information System (NEIS), overall, have a positive attitude toward their children's education. Over 90% believe that much of their child's learning will take place before entering kindergarten or first grade, and believe that their child's education is the responsibility of their family (refer to Table 2.11). Two-thirds of the Even Start parents report that they read to their children at least once a week (refer to Table 2.3).

2. Findings from program implementation data discussed in Chapter 3 show that some important program features helped to further program objectives and contribute to improved communication and reciprocity between home and school. Even Start staff report a better understanding of the problems that both parents and staff encounter and feel closer partnerships with parents. A major theme that occurs throughout staff reports on program implementation (features such as, coordination at the sites, sharing between sites, family/staff ratios, recruitment of families, facilities and administrative supports, community linkages, cultural sensitivity) was strong peer support, administrative support and interpersonal support at all levels. Refer to Tables 3.2, 3.3A, and 3.3B. Supports were described with language such as "parent nurturing", peer supports and "mothers to mothers"; reciprocity was presented as "child teaches the parent and parent teaches the child", and "fellowship between parents, children and staff".

Problem areas were found that can negatively impact on successful program implementation and which can confound the results expected of model programs designed to change both attitudes and behaviors. Program implementation problems identified by staff included: barriers to successful participation rates, poor attendance and transportation needs for some parents. Problems related to family/school communication are exacerbated by gaps in needed bilingual services. The absence of counseling and community services illustrate the importance of joint planning that values parent perspectives and needs other than those directly related to education. Problems related to school facilities and building security impact on positive environmental conditions that are conducive to learning.

3. Even Start parents who had not completed high school reported visiting the school more frequently and talking with the teacher more frequently than either a similar cohort of non program parents or Even Start parents with a high school diploma (refer to Table 4.10). However, Even Start parents overall report "listening to their child read" less frequently than Non-Even Start parents as an activity and had lower participation rates in Learning Activities With Child and Family Literacy Activities (refer to Table 4.6). Several factors may be influencing these findings. Even Start children were more likely to be younger than the comparison cohort. Even Start parents were also less likely to have completed high school than the Non-Even Start parents. Although the Even Start parents may be more deficient in educational skills than the comparison cohort, these findings suggest that Even Start parents may be benefitting from the program in ways that are preparatory to changing actual learning/teaching behaviors. Voluntary participation in a program designed to help parents improve their own academic skills may translate into helping parents become more confident partners in their children's learning. In addition to level of school completed by parent, a look at other potential mediating variables showed that neither language nor employment status appeared to influence parental participation rates in literacy related activities.

4. Both Even Start and Non-Even Start parents showed similar high levels of agreement on the survey items which assessed Parental Attitudes Toward Their Children's Schools and Parent Involvement. Both groups were positive about beliefs that they can help their children in reading and math, believe the school environment is a good place, and report that they feel welcome at their child's school (Refer to Table 4.3.)

5. On the Parent's Rating of School to Home Communication, there were no significant differences between the two parent groups, except for one item on how well the school does in communicating with parents about their children's learning or on the various modes of school communication. Both parent groups were likely to report that schools could overall do better on a number of these items or that they were not doing these activities at all - i.e. send home news, invite parents to school programs, report on how child is doing in school, parent-teacher conferences. However, there was a significant difference, with 64% of Even Start parents reporting that the school does well on explaining how to check my child's homework. This rate compared with only 37% of Non-Even Start parents giving the same "does well" rating to the school. (Refer to Table 4.9.)

6. Teacher survey findings show that Even Start program teachers who become more experienced with a more comprehensive parent involvement model are likely to translate these values into more concrete strategies that support home/school learning

partnerships. There were more items with significant bivariate correlations for the Even Start teacher sample with the item "contact parents about students' problems or failure". All are suggestive of more active, ongoing and reciprocal communication.

7. Teacher survey findings show that on items used to assess "types of parent involvement" which teachers valued as important, more Even Start teachers identified as "strong now" workshops for parents to build skills in parenting and understanding their children at each grade level, communications from the school to the home that can be understood and used by all families, and communications about report cards so that parents understand students' progress and needs. More Even Start teachers reported "need to improve" for workshops for parents on creating home conditions for learning and ways to support the school, as contrasted with the 60% response of Non-Even Start teachers that this area "needed to be developed". Although the observational interpretations made of the findings shown in Table 5.3 are based on a small sample, they suggest that more support is implied in Even Start teacher responses for specific intervention strategies that teachers can transmit as effective learning strategies to parents. These findings may reflect the more focused needs related to program development and staff training which is already a result of Even Start program experience and training.

8. Teacher survey findings show that more items in the Parent Obligations measure were significantly associated with items in the School Level Obligations measure for the Even Start teacher sample. These associations suggest more continuity and congruity between School Level and Parent Level Responsibilities for learning. These findings are contrasted with the absence of significant associations between items on parent obligations and school obligations for the Non-Even Start teacher sample. Significant correlations for the Non-Even Start sample between teacher beliefs that parent involvement is important for student success in learning and staying in school with a need identified for in-service training to understand and implement effective parent involvement practices, suggests that Non program teachers perceive that additional skills and strategies are needed to implement effective parent involvement.

Evaluation Concerns:

There are a number of evaluation limitations that need to be addressed:

1. The kinds of literacy materials in the home, parents' attitudes toward literacy, as well as parents' own reading habits, need to be assessed more extensively.

2. Small sample sizes of 11 Even Start program teachers and 11 Non-Even Start teachers limit the generalizability of the results. The need to replicate with larger samples is urged in order to confirm patterns and trends which this data may suggest.

3. Although the Even Start teacher sample and Non-Even Start teacher sample were matched on school sites, they were not matched on grade levels or teaching responsibilities. Differences in teaching responsibilities may have contributed to ambiguities in how teachers responded to questions that were asked about basic obligations of Schools in the context of the grade levels which teachers taught. The question may have different meanings substantively for the 11 Non-Even Start teachers all of whom were teaching pre-K to grade 2 and for the Even Start teachers who also

taught an upper grade level, basic skills, and included the Even Start experience with children ages 2-8.

4. It is recommended that modifications to the Cervone and O'Leary criteria for identifying active versus passive parent involvement roles be incorporated into measures when the study is replicated to include items that would more adequately assess whether the flow of communication from school to home is frequent and whether "planned efforts or strategies" are carried out by teachers to help parents be actively involved. It is also recommended that items be included to identify parent involvement in governance and advocacy, and decision making as proposed by Epstein and Dauber (1989).

Recommendations:

We need to continue monitoring those problem areas that impact on successful program implementation and identify how they may serve to confound the results and outcomes in programs expected to enhance school success and improve student outcomes. Issues like program participation rates, gaps in bilingual services, absence of supportive counseling services, school building safety and security, relate mostly to system-level variables that serve to legitimize and prioritize the "special program". These system variables include administrative support, staff development, joint planning, networking with other resources, and an evaluation process which monitors program stages, supports program revision, and provides for tracking of program activities. A more careful follow up on implementation factors would help to link intermediate variables to educational/social outcomes;

Findings from the parent survey emphasize the need and challenge to develop additional strategies that translate values which are supportive of parent as teacher into behaviors that will enhance children's learning. Program revisions that are encouraged and have already been initiated include:

1. the addition of community aides to address problems that have been noted around parent participation rates, language barriers, and networking with community services.

2. the addition of staff/parent training and workshops that continue to strengthen staff/parent bonding and opportunities to model active learning behaviors and increase opportunities for sharing between sites;

3. a new curriculum for adult basic skills that addresses appropriate skill and interest levels based upon parental assessment, parental input and joint staff/parent planning;

4. efforts should be made to maintain the community and school based nature of the Even Start program to maximize parent contact with their child's school. School based services appear to contribute to effective home/school communication and need to be nurtured at the very early formal stages of students' educational experiences. Differential needs of early childhood should be considered in planning for the district's Parent Resource Center.

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APPENDIX A

ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS AND PARENT AS A TEACHER SURVEY

I am going to ask you several questions about (child's name).

1. Here is a list of household tasks that children sometimes help with. Please tell me how often (child's name) helped with each of these tasks in the last month.
Read response choices to parent and marknone oval for each item.

	Child Too Young	Never	Once or Twice	On a Regular Basis
a. Clean or peel food for a meal	○	○	○	○
b. Mix or stir foods	○	○	○	○
c. Find food on shelves at the grocery store for you	○	○	○	○
d. Take the dishes off the table after meals	○	○	○	○
e. Put clean clothes into the right drawers or shelves	○	○	○	○

2. About how often do you read stories to *(child's name)*?

Do not read responses.
Mark appropriate category.

○ a. *Every day* ○ c. *Once a week*
○ b. *At least 3 times a week* ○ d. *Less than once a week* ○ e. *Never*

3. About how many children's books are there in your home that *(child's name)* can look at?

Do not read responses.

○ a. *None* ○ c. *3 to 9 books*
○ b. *1 or 2 books* ○ d. *10 or more books*

4. Which of the following do you have in your home for *(child's name)* to look at or read?

Mark all that apply

○ a. Magazines ○ c. T.V. Guide ○ e. Other reading material, i.e. Bibles, catalogs
○ b. Newspapers ○ d. Comic books

5. I'll read you a list of things children can play with. Tell me which ones you have in your home.

	Child Too Young	Yes	No
a. Crayons and paper	○	○	○
b. Scissors	○	○	○
c. Scotch tape, paste or stapler	○	○	○
d. Puzzles	○	○	○
e. Old picture catalogs, like Sears, to read and cut up	○	○	○
f. Paint or magic marker	○	○	○
g. Clay or playdough	○	○	○
h. "Put together" toys like Tinkertoys, Legos or beads for stringing	○	○	○
i. Hammer and nails with some wood scraps	○	○	○
j. Yarn, thread and cloth scraps for knitting or sewing	○	○	○
k. Make believe toys out of milk cartons, tin cans or egg cartons	○	○	○
l. Plants of his/her own in a pot or garden	○	○	○

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6. I'll read you a list of things children learn as they grow up. Tell me which of them you have helped *(child's name)* with in the past month.

	Child Too Young	Yes, Helped	No, Did not help
a. Nursery rhymes or songs	○	○	○
b. Colors	○	○	○
c. Shapes, such as circle, squares or triangles	○	○	○
d. To write his/her name	○	○	○
e. To remember your address and telephone number	○	○	○
f. To count things	○	○	○
g. To recognize numbers in books	○	○	○
h. To say the "abc's"	○	○	○
i. To recognize letters in books	○	○	○
j. To read words on signs or in books	○	○	○
k. Ideas like "big-little", "up-down", "before-after"	○	○	○

7. I'll read you a list of things that parents and children sometimes talk about or do together. How often do you or your spouse/partner do any of these things with *(child's name)*?

	Child Too Young	Daily	Once/Twice a Week	Once/Twice a Month	Rarely, If Ever	Never
a. Talk with child about school activities or events	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. Talk with child about things studied in school	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. Talk with child about his/her problems	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. Talk with child about expectations for school performance	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. Talk with child about future plans and goals	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. Listen to child read	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ask only if child is in primary grades:	○	○	○	○	○	○
g. Help child with homework	○	○	○	○	○	○
h. Check to see if homework is done	○	○	○	○	○	○

8. How well do you think *(child's name)* will do in school? Do you think *(child's name)* will do: ***Read response choices to parent. Mark only one oval***

○ a. Very well ○ c. About average ○ e. Very poorly

○ b. Well ○ d. Poorly ○ f. Don't know

9. How likely do you think it is that *(child's name)* will graduate from high school? Do you think *(child's name)* is: ***Read response choices to parent. Mark only one oval***

○ a. Very likely to graduate from high school ○ c. Not very likely to graduate

○ b. Somewhat likely ○ d. Probably will not graduate from high school

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Ask only if the answer to # 9 was (a) or (b).

10. What is the highest you think *(child's name)* will get in school? ***Mark highest choice.***

No	Yes		
○	○	a.	Do you think *(child's name)* will graduate from college?
If YES:	○	b.	Do you think *(child's name)* will attend graduate school after college (for example to become a doctor or lawyer)?
If NO:	○	c.	Do you think *(child's name)* will go to vocational, trade or business school after high school?
If NO:	○	d.	Do you think *(child's name)* will graduate from high school but won't go any further in school?

11. Here are some statements about children. I will read each statement and then I want you to tell me if you **agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly.** Think of *(child's name)* when answering. Here is one for practice. I'll read the statement:

All children need hugs sometimes.

Do you **agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat,** or **disagree strongly** with that statement? OK. Let's go on with the rest of the statements.

	Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly	Refused Don't Know
a. Much of my child's learning will take place before he/she enters kindergarten or first grade.	○	○	○	○	○
b. My child needs to play with me.	○	○	○	○	○
c. Playing with my child makes me feel restless.	○	○	○	○	○
d. It is hard for me to tell when my child has learned something.	○	○	○	○	○
e. It is difficult for me to think of things to say to my child during play.	○	○	○	○	○
f. Playing with my child improves the child's behavior.	○	○	○	○	○
g. More of my child's learning at this age takes place by watching people and things rather than being told.	○	○	○	○	○
h. It is difficult for me to stay interested when playing with my child.	○	○	○	○	○
i. I scold my child when he/she doesn't learn.	○	○	○	○	○
j. I imitate my child's speech when we play so that the child understands.	○	○	○	○	○
k. My child learns by playing with other children.	○	○	○	○	○
l. If we play whenever my child wants to, not much learning will take place.	○	○	○	○	○
m. My child's education is the responsibility of our family.	○	○	○	○	○
n. I really like to teach my child something new.	○	○	○	○	○

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

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APPENDIX A

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION SURVEY

Dear Even Start Staff Member:

As a part of the local evaluation of Even Start, we would like to know the perceptions of the project staff about program implementation and operations at their schools.

The survey is broad and touches on various aspects of Even Start, so that if some questions do not apply to your particular role in the program, please note this by a NA (Not Applicable) reply.

All surveys are anonymous. Information will be treated confidentially. Responses will not be individually identified.

****

After completing the survey, please place in attached envelope and return to the Even Start Coordinator at your school. The surveys will be picked up on WEDNESDAY JUNE 12th after 3 P.M.

****

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE.

PROJECT EVEN START: STAFF INFORMATION SCHEDULE ON PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AND OPERATIONS

School: _____

1. Which of the following Even Start component(s) did you work with the most, and rate how effective you thought it/they were.(VE: very effective, NE: not effective). (Check more than one where appropriate)

	Worked With	Did Not Work With	5 (VE)	4	3	2	1 (NE)
a).Adult Basic Skills	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
b).Parenting	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
c).Parent/Child Together	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
d.Early Childhood	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

2. What are your views about the following objectives of Project Even Start and how important do you feel each is to the program and why?

a) Adult Basic Skills Objectives - which include objectives to increase adult literacy, GED training, English fluency.... _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

b). Parenting Skills Objectives which include child development, health, safety, parent as teacher.... _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

c). Parent/Child Together Objectives which include learning together activities like the take home computer project .... _____

_____

___

d). Early Childhood Objectives which include pre-school/learning activities between staff/children....

3. What are your views about the following organizational features of Project Even Start and how important do you feel each was to the program and why?

Coordination at your site

Sharing of information between sites

Recruitment of Even Start Families

(2)

Family/Staff Ratio:

Classrooms, facilities, other administrative supports

Linkages with community resources _____

_____

_____

_____

4. Were there any characteristics of the families in project Even Start that made implementation of the program easy or difficult?_____

_____

_____

_____

5. Could you contrast your experiences this year as an Even Start staff member with your previous experiences with parents at the school? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. In what ways were program supports and program content culturally responsive to the interests and characteristics of the culturally diverse population of Even Start Families?_____

_____

_____

_____

(OVER)

3

6. Could you describe your perceptions of how Project Even Start may have affected the self esteem of participating parents and children (give e x a m p l e s)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. In what ways were program supports and program content culturally responsive to the interests and characteristics of the culturally diverse population of Even Start Families?_____

_____

_____

_____

8. What were:

a. important strengths of the project at your site:

b. areas that need improvement:

4

9. Were there any problems (in addition to any you may already have noted) which you encountered in the implementation of the program?

10. Please use this space to write any other comment you feel is important for us to take into account when putting together the 1st year evaluation report of Even Start.

APPENDIX A

PARENT SURVEY

Dear Parent:

We would like your assistance in completing this survey to help identify how Newark schools and families can assist each other more effectively. It will provide information on how schools try to involve families in their children's education and what are the most useful practices.

Your school currently is part of a national Even Start program initiative authorized under federal legislation and is intended to

- help parents become partners in the education of their children;
- assist children in learning to their potential;
- provide adult education for parents;

The Office of Planning, Evaluation and Testing of the Newark Board of Education is using this survey as part of the evaluation of the Even Start projects. The results of this survey will be used to help strengthen parent involvement projects. A survey will also be administered to teachers at your school site who teach early childhood grades kindergarten thru grade 2 so that we can learn about teachers' ideas and needs as well.

All information you provide is completely confidential. No parents' responses will ever be individually identified.

****

Please complete the survey and have your child
Return it to his or her teacher TOMORROW

****

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP.

Si usted tiene dificultades en leer o escribir en ingles, solicite a alguna persona en su familia que lo ayude.

This survey should be answered by PARENT or GUARDIAN WHO HAS THE MOST CONTACT with the School about the Child. Name of School:_____

Who is filling in the booklet?
PLEASE CHECK IF YOU ARE....

_____mother	_____aunt	_____guardian
_____father	_____uncle	_____other relative
_____stepmother	_____grandmother	_____other describe
_____stepfather	_____grandfather	

HOW MANY CHILDREN from your family go to the above named School THIS YEAR?

(Please CIRCLE)

1 2 3 4 5 or more

What GRADES are they in? CIRCLE ALL of the grades of your children in this school...

Pre-K Kindergarten Grade 1 2 3 4 5 Other_____

If you have more than one child at this school, please answer the question in the booklet about your youngest child.

Q-1. We would like to know how you feel about this school right NOW? This will help us plan for the future.

Please CIRCLE one choice for each statement...

STRONGLY AGREE with the statement
AGREE with the statement
DISAGREE with the statement
STRONGLY DISAGREE with the statement

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THESE...

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
a. This is a very good school.	SA	A	D	SA
b. The teachers care about my child.	SA	A	D	SA
c. I feel welcome at the school.	SA	A	D	SA

(OVER)

		STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
d.	My child likes to talk about school at home.	SA	A	D	SA
e.	My child should get more homework.	SA	A	D	SA
f.	Many parents I know help out at the school.	SA	A	D	SA
g.	The school and I have different goals for my child.	SA	A	D	SA
h.	I feel I can help my child in reading.	SA	A	D	SA
i.	I feel I can help my child in math.	SA	A	D	SA
j.	I could help my child more if the teacher gave me more ideas.	SA	A	D	SA
k.	My child is learning as much as he/she can at this school.	SA	A	D	SA
l.	Parents get involved more in the younger grades.	SA	A	D	SA
m.	This school is a good place for students and for parents.	SA	A	D	SA

Q-2. Some families want more information about what their children are learning in each subject.

CHECK WHICH SUBJECTS YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT TO HELP YOUR CHILD:

_____math skills
_____reading skills
_____writing skills
_____spelling
_____social studies
_____science
_____handwriting
_____speaking skills
_____current events
_____study skills
_____coping with problems
_____Other

Q-3. Families get involved in different ways at school or at home. Which of the following have you done <u>this year</u> with the <u>youngest child</u> you have at this school? Please CIRCLE one choice for each.

NEVER DO	means you do NOT do this
NOT YET	means you have NOT done this yet this year
1-2 TIMES	means you have done this ONCE or FEW TIMES this year
MANY TIMES	means you have done this MANY TIMES this year

---

a.	Talk to the child about school work.	NEVER DO	NOT YET	1-2 TIMES	MANY TIMES
b.	Visit the classroom.	NEVER DO	NOT YET	1-2 TIMES	MANY TIMES
c.	Read to the child.	NEVER DO	NOT YET	1-2 TIMES	MANY TIMES
d.	Listen to the child read.	NEVER DO	NOT YET	1-2 TIMES	MANY TIMES
e.	Listen to a story the child wrote.	NEVER DO	NOT YET	1-2 TIMES	MANY TIMES
f.	Help child with homework.	NEVER DO	NOT YET	1-2 TIMES	MANY TIMES
g.	See that child makes up work after being absent.	NEVER DO	NOT YET	1-2 TIMES	MANY TIMES
h.	Practice spelling or other skills before a test.	NEVER DO	NOT YET	1-2 TIMES	MANY TIMES
i.	Talk to child about a TV show.	NEVER DO	NOT YET	1-2 TIMES	MANY TIMES
j.	Play games at home to teach child new things.	NEVER DO	NOT YET	1-2 TIMES	MANY TIMES
k.	Teach chores to do for the family at home.	NEVER DO	NOT YET	1-2 TIMES	MANY TIMES
l.	Talk with the teacher at school.	NEVER DO	NOT YET	1-2 TIMES	MANY TIMES
m.	Talk to teacher on phone.	NEVER DO	NOT YET	1-2 TIMES	MANY TIMES
n.	Go to PTA/PTO meetings.	NEVER DO	NOT YET	1-2 TIMES	MANY TIMES
o.	Check to see that child has done homework.	NEVER DO	NOT YET	1-2 TIMES	MANY TIMES
p.	Go to special events at the school.	NEVER DO	NOT YET	1-2 TIMES	MANY TIMES
q.	Take child to a library.	NEVER DO	NOT YET	1-2 TIMES	MANY TIMES

Take on the trips around the city.	NEVER DO	NOT YET	1-2 TIMES	MANY TIMES

Q-4. Schools contact families in different ways. CIRCLE one choice to tell if the school has done these things this year....

DOES NOT DO	means the school DOES NOT DO this
COULD DO BETTER	means the school DOES this but COULD DO BETTER
DOES WELL	means the school DOES this VERY WELL now

a. Tell me how my child is doing in school.	DOES NOT DO	COULD DO BETTER	DOES WELL
b. Tell me what skills my child needs to learn each year.	DOES NOT DO	COULD DO BETTER	DOES WELL
c. Explain how to check my child's homework.	DOES NOT DO	COULD DO BETTER	DOES WELL
d. Give ideas of how to help my child at home.	DOES NOT DO	COULD DO BETTER	DOES WELL
e. Ask me to volunteer for a few hours at the school.	DOES NOT DO	COULD DO BETTER	DOES WELL
f. Send home clear notices that can be read.	DOES NOT DO	COULD DO BETTER	DOES WELL
g. Invite me to programs at the school.	DOES NOT DO	COULD DO BETTER	DOES WELL
h. Have a parent-teacher conference with me.	DOES NOT DO	COULD DO BETTER	DOES WELL
i. Send home news about things happening at school.	DOES NOT DO	COULD DO BETTER	DOES WELL

Q-5. The last questions will help us plan new programs to meet your family's needs.

---

a. About how much time does your youngest child spend doing homework on most school days?

minutes my child does homework on most school days .....(CIRCLE ONE)

0 5-10 15-20 25-30 35-45 50-60 over 1 hour

---

b. How much time do you spend helping your child on an average night?

MINUTES OF MY TIME: 0 5-10 15-20 25-30 35-45 50-60 over 1 hour

---

c. How much time COULD YOU SPEND working with your child if the teacher showed you what to do?

MINUTES I <u>COULD</u> SPEND: 0 5-10 15-20 25-30 35-45 50-60 over 1 hour

---

d. Do you have time on weekends to work with your child on projects or homework for school? _____yes _____no

---

e. How is the <u>youngest child you have at this school</u> doing in school work?

MY YOUNGEST CHILD (or ONLY CHILD) at this school is...(CHECK ONE)

_____one of the TOP students
_____GOOD student
_____OK, AVERAGE student
_____FAIR student
_____POOR student

---

f. WHEN do you like to attend conferences, meetings or workshops at the school?

_____morning _____afternoon _____evening

---

g. How many adults live at home? _____adults

How many children live at home? _____children

---

h. What is your education? CHECK ONE...

_____did not complete high school

_____completed high school

_____beyond high school

i. Do you work at home or outside the the home? CHECK ONE...

_____work at home

_____part-time job

_____full-time job

APPENDIX A

TEACHER SURVEY

Dear Teacher:

We would like your assistance in completing this survey to help identify how Newark schools and families can assist each other more effectively. It will provide information on how schools try to involve families in their children's education and what are the most useful practices.

Your school currently is part of a national Even Start program initiative authorized under federal legislation and is intended to

> "...improve the educational opportunities of the Nation's children and adults by integrating early childhood education and adult education for parents into a unified program....The program shall be implemented through cooperative projects that build on existing community resources to create a new range of services." (P.L. 100-297, Sec.1051).

The Office of Planning, Evaluation and Testing of the Newark Board of Education adapted this survey developed at John Hopkins University as part of the Hopkins' surveys of School and Family Connections. The results of this survey will be used in the local evaluation of the 3 Even Start projects. A survey for parents will also be administered so that we can learn more about Newark parents' ideas and needs.

All information you provide is completely confidential. No teachers' responses will ever be individually identified. Your participation is of course voluntary.

Please complete the survey and return it to the school mailbox of the EVEN START COORDINATOR at your school by

3 P.M. WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12th

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP.

****
* Even Start Coordinators *
****

Brenda Bailey	Quitman Street School
Prentise White	Dr William Horton School
Judy Zinno	13th Avenue School

NOTE: In all questions which follow, "parent" means the adult in the family who has the most contact with the school about the child.

Feel free to expand your answers in the margins or back page of the survey.

Q-1. The first questions ask for your professional judgement about parent involvement. Please circle the one choice for each item that best represents your opinion and experience.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. Parent involvement is important for good school climate.	SD	D	A	SA
b. Some parents already know how to help their children on school work at home.	SD	D	A	SA
c. This school has an active and effective parent organization (e.g. PTA or PTO).	SD	D	A	SA
d. Every family has some strengths that could be tapped to increase student success in school.	SD	D	A	SA
e. All parents could learn ways to assist their children on school work at home.	SD	D	A	SA
f. Parent involvement can help teachers be more effective with more students.	SD	D	A	SA
g. Teachers should receive recognition or compensation for time spent on parent involvement activities.	SD	D	A	SA
h. Parents of children at this school want to be involved more than they are now at most grade levels.	SD	D	A	SA
i. Teachers cannot take the time to involve parents in very useful ways.	SD	D	A	SA
j. Teachers need in-service training to understand and implement effective parent involvement practices.	SD	D	A	SA
k. Parent involvement is important for student success in learning and staying in school.	SD	D	A	SA
l. At the grade level I teach, family and school connections are important on topics such as drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy, and drop out prevention.	SD	D	A	SA

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
m. Compared to other schools, this school has one of the best school climates for teachers, students, and parents.	SD	D	A	SA

Q-2. Teachers must choose among many worthwhile activities to assist their students. The next questions ask for your professional opinions about which parent involvement activities are most important for teachers to conduct <u>at your grade level</u>. Please CIRCLE ONE choice for each.

	How important is this practice to you?			
	NOT IMPORTANT	A LITTLE IMPORTANT	PRETTY IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
a. Conduct conferences with all parents at least once a year.	NOT IMP	A LITTLE IMP	PRETTY IMP	VERY IMP
b. Attend evening meetings, performances, and workshops.	NOT IMP	A LITTLE IMP	PRETTY IMP	VERY IMP
c. Contact parents about students' problems or failure.	NOT IMP	A LITTLE IMP	PRETTY IMP	VERY IMP
d. Participate in parent-teacher-student clubs or activities.	NOT IMP	A LITTLE IMP	PRETTY IMP	VERY IMP
e. Inform parents when children do something very well.	NOT IMP	A LITTLE IMP	PRETTY IMP	VERY IMP
f. Involve some parents in the classroom.	NOT IMP	A LITTLE IMP	PRETTY IMP	VERY IMP
g. Inform all parents of the skills required to pass each subject at your grade level.	NOT IMP	A LITTLE IMP	PRETTY IMP	VERY IMP
h. Inform parents how report card grades are earned.	NOT IMP	A LITTLE IMP	PRETTY IMP	VERY IMP
i. Provide ideas to help parents talk with their children about school work at home.	NOT IMP	A LITTLE IMP	PRETTY IMP	VERY IMP
j. Provide specific activities that parents and children can do to improve school work at home.	NOT IMP	A LITTLE IMP	PRETTY IMP	VERY IMP
k. Provide ideas for discussing specific TV shows.	NOT IMP	A LITTLE IMP	PRETTY IMP	VERY IMP
l. Assign homework that requires children to interact with parents.	NOT IMP	A LITTLE IMP	PRETTY IMP	VERY IMP

	NOT IMPORTANT	A LITTLE IMPORTANT	PRETTY IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
m. Suggest ways to practice spelling or other skills at home before a test at school.	NOT IMP	A LITTLE IMP	PRETTY IMP	VERY IMP
n. Ask parents to listen to children read.	NOT IMP	A LITTLE IMP	PRETTY IMP	VERY IMP
o. Ask parents to listen to or discuss a story or paragraph that children write.	NOT IMP	A LITTLE IMP	PRETTY IMP	VERY IMP
p. Provide guidelines for discussing current events at home.	NOT IMP	A LITTLE IMP	PRETTY IMP	VERY IMP
q. Work with other teachers to develop parent involvement activities and materials.	NOT IMP	A LITTLE IMP	PRETTY IMP	VERY IMP

Q-3. All schools serve different populations of parents with different needs and skills. The next questions ask for your judgement about specific ways of involving families at your school. Please circle one choice to tell whether you think each type of involvement is.

NOT IMPORTANT	= NOT IMP	(Means this is not part of your program now, and SHOULD NOT BE).
NEEDS TO BE DEVELOPED	= NEED TO DEV	(Means this is not part of your program now, but SHOULD BE).
NEEDS TO BE IMPROVED	= NEED TO IMPRV	(Means this is part of your program, but NEEDS TO BE STRENGTHENED).
ALREADY A STRONG PROGRAM	= STRONG NOW	(Means this is a STRONG program for most most parents AT ALL GRADE LEVELS).

TYPE OF INVOLVEMENT	AT THIS SCHOOL NOT IMPORTANT	NEED TO DEVELOP	NEED TO IMPROVE	STRONG NOW
a. WORKSHOPS for parents to build skills in PARENTING and understanding their children at each grade level.	NOT IMP	NEED TO DEV	NEED IMPRV	STRONG NOW
b. WORKSHOPS for parents on creating HOME CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING, and ways to support the school.	NOT IMP	NEED TO DEV	NEED IMPRV	STRONG NOW
c. COMMUNICATIONS from the school to the home that can be understood and used by all families.	NOT IMP	NEED TO DEV	NEED IMPRV	STRONG NOW

TYPE OF INVOLVEMENT	NOT IMPORTANT	NEED TO DEVELOP	NEED TO IMPROVE	STRONG NOW
d. COMMUNICATIONS about REPORT CARDS so that parents understand students' progress and needs.	NOT IMP	NEED TO DEV	NEED IMPRV	STRONG NOW
e. COMMUNICATIONS in parent teacher CONFERENCES with all families.	NOT IMP	NEED TO DEV	NEED IMPRV	STRONG NOW
f. VOLUNTEERS at the school to obtain and train parents.	NOT IMP	NEED TO DEV	NEED IMPRV	STRONG NOW
g. VOLUNTEERS in classrooms to assist teachers and students.	NOT IMP	NEED TO DEV	NEED IMPRV	STRONG NOW
h. INFORMATION TO PARENTS on how to monitor homework.	NOT IMP	NEED TO DEV	NEED IMPRV	STRONG NOW
i. INFORMATION TO PARENTS on how to help their children with specific skills and subject.	NOT IMP	NEED TO DEV	NEED IMPRV	STRONG NOW
j. Involvement by more families in PTA/ PTO leadership, other COMMITTEES, or other decision making roles.	NOT IMP	NEED TO DEV	NEED IMPRV	STRONG NOW
k. Family-School programs for AFTER SCHOOL care, recreation, and home-work help.	NOT IMP	NEED TO DEV	NEED IMPRV	STRONG NOW

Q-4. Parents also have responsibilities for becoming involved in their children's education. The next questions ask for your professional opinions about the activities that you think should be conducted by <u>the parents of the children you teach</u>. Circle the choice that best describes the importance of these activities <u>at your grade level</u>.

	NOT IMPORTANT	A LITTLE IMPORTANT	PRETTY IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
a. Send children to school ready to learn.	NOT IMP	A LITTLE IMP	PRETTY IMP	VERY IMP
b. Teach children to behave well.	NOT IMP	A LITTLE IMP	PRETTY IMP	VERY IMP
c. Set up quiet place and time for studying at home.	NOT IMP	A LITTLE IMP	PRETTY IMP	VERY IMP
d. Encourage children to volunteer in class.	NOT IMP	A LITTLE IMP	PRETTY IMP	VERY IMP
e. Know what children are expected to learn each year.	NOT IMP	A LITTLE IMP	PRETTY IMP	VERY IMP
f. Monitor homework.	NOT IMP	A LITTLE IMP	PRETTY IMP	VERY IMP

	NOT IMPORTANT	A LITTLE IMPORTANT	PRETTY IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
g. Talk to children about what they are learning in school.	NOT IMP	A LITTLE IMP	PRETTY IMP	VERY IMP
h. Help children practice spelling, vocabulary, or other skills.	NOT IMP	A LITTLE IMP	PRETTY IMP	VERY IMP
i. Ask teachers for specific ideas on how to help their children at home.	NOT IMP	A LITTLE IMP	PRETTY IMP	VERY IMP
j. Talk to teachers about problems the children are facing at home.	NOT IMP	A LITTLE IMP	PRETTY IMP	VERY IMP
l. Take children to places and events in the community.	NOT IMP	A LITTLE IMP	PRETTY IMP	VERY IMP

Optional: We would value your ideas on the following questions if you can take a few more minutes to help.

a. What is the most successful parent involvement practice that you have used, or that you have heard about?

CHECK WHICH: _____I have used this OR _____Have not used, but heard about this

b. What problems should be kept in mind when planning for better parent involvement in ways that can help teachers?

c. Of all the items in the survey which one(s) may be most useful in your own teaching practice at the grade level(s) you teach.

d. You may use this space or another page to expand your answers, add suggestions to the questions in the booklet, or add any other ideas.

SCHOOL:_____ GRADE LEVEL:_____

EVEN START STAFF:_____YES _____NO

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP!

PLEASE RETURN THIS SURVEY TO THE MAILBOX OF SCHOOL'S

EVEN START COORDINATOR

APPENDIX B

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS

FOR QUESTIONS 1, 3, 4

OF

TEACHER SURVEY

Appendix B

Means and Standard Deviations for Questions 1, 3, and 4 of Teacher Survey

Question	Cases	Mean	Std Dev
Q1A	21	3.8095	.4024
Q1B	22	2.6818	.7799
Q1C	21	2.0476	.8646
Q1D	22	2.7727	.7516
Q1E	22	3.5000	.6726
Q1F	22	3.6364	.5811
Q1G	22	3.3182	.5679
Q1H	22	2.8182	.6645
Q1I	22	2.0000	.6901
Q1J	22	3.0000	.5345
Q1K	22	3.8636	.3513
Q1L	22	3.2273	.8691
Q1M	18	2.6111	1.0369
Q3A	21	2.6667	.8563
Q3B	21	2.5714	.8106
Q3C	21	2.9524	.6690
Q3D	21	3.1905	.6796
Q3E	21	2.9524	.5896
Q3F	22	2.4091	.6661
Q3G	21	2.3333	.5774
Q3H	21	2.6667	.6583
Q3I	21	2.7619	.6249
Q3J	20	2.7500	.6387
Q3K	19	3.0000	.6667
Q4A	22	3.9091	.2942
Q4B	22	3.9091	.2942
Q4C	22	3.9091	.2942
Q4D	22	3.5455	.6710
Q4E	21	3.9048	.3008
Q4F	22	3.8636	.4676
Q4G	22	3.7727	.4289
Q4H	22	3.8182	.3948
Q4I	22	3.8182	.3948
Q4J	22	3.6364	.6580
Q4L	22	3.6364	.5811